

TIPS FOR BUILDING YOUR INTERNSHIP RESUME

RESUMES AREN'T JUST FOR SENIORS

Think resumes are just for seniors launching a job search? Think again. Resumes are commonly required of undergraduates applying for internships, co-ops, and other experiential programs. Yet, requests for a resume as part of the internship application process still catch many students by surprise!

"I didn't think I would need a resume to apply for summer internships," groans Sandi, a college sophomore. I've never written one and I haven't done anything interesting. My reason for interning, in the first place, is to get some experience to put on my resume."

Sandi, like all college students, should have begun to "grow" her resume right from the start of her college career. Working toward your career begins the day you set foot on campus, not some time in the distant future. Your resume should track your progress toward your career goals, changing each semester as you add new jobs, activities, and classes to the mix. With frequent updates, your resume will be ready to mail or e-mail to potential internship sites at a moment's notice.

GETTING STARTED

Getting started on your first resume isn't easy. If you're like most first timers, your big stumbling block is the anxiety you feel trying to translate your background and experience into "marketable" terms. Early in your college career, you may worry that you haven't done nearly enough to interest potential internship employers, that your resume will expose your weaknesses rather than showcase your strengths.

Step 1 - Think like an employer

- Put aside the ways you would benefit from an experiential program--career-related exposure and experience, introductions to influential people, learning valuable skills--and step into an internship supervisor's shoes.
- Ask yourself what qualities the supervisor would wish for in an ideal intern. Your brainstorming will probably result in a list of praiseworthy characteristics: dependable, responsible, well-organized, capable of independent work and team work, able to learn quickly, personable, skilled at written and oral communication, computer literate, persuasive, personable, and so forth.

Step 2 - Think about your experiences

Think about jobs you've held, courses you've taken, honors you've received, and activities in which you have participated. Pinpoint situations in which you demonstrated some of these winning traits. It's fine to think back to your high school years, especially if you are a freshman or sophomore in college. Here are some examples of how experiences and activities can demonstrate important qualities about you:

- Handling large sums of money as a cashier shows that you are trustworthy.
- Working three summers at the same camp shows that your employer had confidence in your abilities.
- Having a high GPA tells the world that you learn quickly and apply yourself diligently.
- Serving as a lifeguard at the neighborhood pool shows you can react quickly in emergency situations.
- Working for the school paper reveals your writing skills.
- Holding a club office shows your leadership and interpersonal skills.
- Participating in sports can show you are a "good team player."
- Having taken introductory courses in computers, marketing, or public speaking suggests that you have some basic knowledge on which to build.
- Build your self-confidence and self-esteem by taking stock of your skills and accomplishments. You may not have career-related experience yet, but you do have attributes that would make you a valued intern or co-op student able to contribute to an organization. Give yourself credit where credit is due.

Step 3 - Package your information

Now that you know what you have to offer, it's time to get down to the business of "packaging" your material in the traditional resume format—the chronological resume.

Don't experiment with fonts, formats, and creative methods of organization now—that's best left for your future full-time job search. For now, arrange your information in reverse chronological order within these categories:

- Identifying information (name, address, telephone number, e-mail address);
- Objective (one line that gives your immediate goal);
- Education (name, city, and state of all degree- or diploma-granting institutions, plus your major, minor, and concentration);
- Relevant course work (optional);
- Experience (job title, place where you worked, city, state, and dates of employment along with a description of your tasks and accomplishments);
- Activities;
- Special skills.

TIPS FOR CREATING YOUR RESUME

Your resume should be:

- **Brief:** A one-page resume is usually long enough to cover the highlights of your academic background, job experiences, activities, and skills.
- **Accurate:** An error-free resume communicates attention to detail and organizational skills. Double check your dates. Provide the month and year to indicate span of employment or participation. Proof read carefully and critically; don't rely solely on a spell check!
- **Proud:** Stress your accomplishments. Use action verbs, examples, and numbers to create a vivid picture of your achievements. State what you learned from the experience as well as what you did. Be sure to mention if you trained new employees, contributed new ideas, or received some special recognition.
- **Conservative:** Use quality bond paper in white or off-white. Unusual colors don't scan properly and can be distracting. Use a laser printer to ensure that the printing will be crisp and clear.

WHERE TO FIND HELP

Today is the best time to write your resume. See your campus career office for help. There you'll find resources to help you, such as workshops, handouts, books, and more. Even if you are only a freshman, when opportunity knocks in the form of an exciting internship or co-op, field experience, or practicum, you want to be able to answer the door and present your resume—a proud advertisement for your accomplishments, attributes, and skills.

*Courtesy of the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE)
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