Center for Calling & Career



Design & Direction

Exploration & Experience

Preparation & Pursuit

Conceptual Resume Template

A conceptual template is not a template designed to be filled in bullet point by bullet point. Instead, this template provides principles to use in building a resume that focuses on your unique talents, presented in a way that maximizes the impact of your resume.

An entry level resume may contain the following information:

- Heading
- Objective
- Highlights or Qualifications
- Education
- Significant Coursework
- Experience
- Awards and Honors
- Community Service and/or Extracurricular Involvements



GENERAL PRINCIPLES

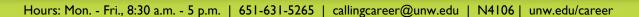
- **Content first, format second.** Decide WHAT you need to say, and then pick a format that enhances that message and makes it easy for the reader to pick up relevant information.
- Relevance matters more than anything else. Your resume content should show that you understand what skills and knowledge matter to each job and employer. If you fill your resume with irrelevant content, you're sending the message that you don't understand what it takes to be successful in that job or industry.
- **Resume length** is determined by industry and level of experience. Most business positions with less than 7 years experience should be a single page.
- Typographical errors are a major complaint of recruiters. Have other people proofread your resume.
- Become familiar with the KEYWORDS of your major/industry. Keywords are the "hot" words associated with a specific industry, profession, personality or personal characteristics, or job function. They are generally nouns, short phrases, abbreviations, or acronyms. When used effectively, a keyword shows that you know how to apply your knowledge, and allows you to communicate an entire message with just a word or two.
- **Infuse your resume and cover letter with keywords, used correctly**. This is especially important on e-resumes, where scanning for keywords is how recruiters identify potential candidates.
- Schedule a resume consultation by stopping in the Center for Calling & Career, N4106, or call us at 651.631.5265.

Section I: HEADING

Include the following parts in your resume heading:

Name

- Easily visible, at the top, in a larger font.
- If your gender is not easily discerned from your first name, consider using Mr. or Ms.



Single Address

- Good for about 6 months from the date your resume is created.
- This should be an address where you can reliably receive mail.
- For most new grads, your education is the primary asset you have to offer an employer. Expanding your education section allows you to demonstrate what knowledge you have acquired.
- Don't just list coursework; describe what you've learned and how it relates to the job. No one is surprised to see that finance majors took Macro Economics or Finance I & II. However, when you can describe the key points of your education, and use appropriate words to do so, your reader finds it easier to believe that you both understand and know how to apply what you have learned.

Phone number

- Single phone number
- Indicate if it's your cell phone
- Area code may mislead employers as to your location, so consider including geographic location or "willing to relocate" in your objective statement
- Make sure your voice mail greeting is extremely professional.
- Use the phone number where you will most reliably receive messages.

Email

- Use a professional email address, preferably related to your name.
- Do not use numbers that hint at your age or special dates in your life. These are obvious and unprofessional.
- Minimize the use of numbers and characters. You should be able to give out your email address over the phone and have it easily understood in order to minimize the chance of error.

E-Portfolio (optional)

Include the address of your e-portfolio if you have one.

Section II: OBJECTIVE

(optional, but consider it carefully)

What do you want to do? If you include this section, it should be a sentence or two about your employment goals. A customized objective that describes why you are the perfect candidate for the job can help your resume stand out from the crowd. It also can help you decide which resume content is most relevant to include.

Section III: CAREER HIGHLIGHTS or QUALIFICATIONS

(optional, may not be practical for new grads)

This customized section lists the key achievements, skills, traits, and experience relevant to the positions for which you are applying. This shows the employer you understand what they need and that you are qualified for the job.

Section IV: EDUCATION

- Place this at the top of your resume if you are a new grad or seeking an internship.
- Make sure your degree is easy to spot it is what the reader is most interested in knowing.
- Include your GPA if it's above 3.0
- State your graduation month and year, even if it's in the future.
- Do not include high school unless there's a strategic reason for doing so, such as you're applying to work there or your high school was in another country.

You do not need to include attendance at other colleges unless particularly relevant or you got a
degree there that's relevant.

Section V: SIGNIFICANT COURSEWORK

- For most new grads, your education is the primary asset you have to offer an employer. Expanding your education section allows you to demonstrate what knowledge you have acquired.
- Don't just list coursework; describe what you've learned and how it relates to the job. No one is surprised to see that finance majors took Macro Economics or Finance I & II. However, when you can describe the key points of your education, and use appropriate words to do so, your reader finds it easier to believe that you both understand and know how to apply what you have learned.

Section VI: EXPERIENCE

- All experience counts paid, unpaid, volunteer, internship, course projects, presentations, self study. Experience is experience, period, and when it comes to illustrating skills, your paid employment may be the least relevant early in your career.
- Don't list responsibilities; list accomplishments and outcomes. Employers don't want to know what you were *supposed* to do (responsibilities); they want to know what you've actually done (accomplishments).
- Include only those aspects of each experience that illustrate how you applied job relevant skills and knowledge in real life situations. No matter how good a skill is, if it's not valuable to the employer, it doesn't belong on the resume.
- Make sure that you include enough adjectives to adequately describe your experience. You want to show depth and scope of experience, and numbers and descriptors help you do that.
- Give each experience a title, organization name, place, and dates. If you didn't have an official title, use a descriptive title that will help the reader understand your role. Lead with the title rather than the business name or the dates of the experience.
- List experiences and points in order of relevance to the job and the employer. Chronology is not as important for a new grad.
- You control how much you say about each experience. Significant experiences go near the top, with more detail. Supporting experiences go near the bottom, with less detail, or even NO detail.

Section VII: AWARDS AND HONORS (optional)

• Academic awards can be included under education. You need not list everything, and shouldn't list things that won't have meaning to the reader.

Section VIII: COMMUNITY SERVICE and EXTRACURRICULAR INVOLVEMENTS

- Don't list these unless they are substantive. You'll be embarrassed if you list one 2-hour experience under community service, and then have to admit in an interview that's all that it was.
- Give each experience a title, organization, place, and dates. Keeping the format the same makes it easy for the reader to pick up on the information.
- Even these things should be strategic. Don't list your hobbies, interests, etc. unless they tell the employer something that will help you get an interview or shows how you fit into the company culture.

RESUME MISTAKES THAT KNOCK YOU OUT by Kevin Donlin

How would a busy recruiter react to your resume? Would it make the "A" pile, or get tossed into the "round file" (i.e., the trash)? To find out, I interviewed Victoria Potter, an experienced recruiter from Edina, Minn.-based Princeton Search Group www.princetonsearch.com). She reads nearly 300 resumes every week and has plenty to say about the good, the bad and the really bad. Get a towel -- her views may hit you like a dash of cold water in the face, especially if your resume makes one of the following common mistakes.

Mistake #1: A Sputtering Start

The average Internet job posting online produces an average response of 200-300 resumes, according to Potter. So if you want to get from the bottom of that pile to the top, your resume had better open with a bang. Unfortunately, most don't. "Only about 5-10 of the 300 resumes I read each week really grab me. The rest are bunk," says Potter. Potter likes a clear objective at top of each resume, so she can quickly figure out if it's worth her time to read further. "The words must strike me. This is not a dress rehearsal – you get only one chance to get into the head of the hiring authority," she says.

Solution: Remember that the purpose of the first line of your resume is ... to compel readers to go to the second line. And so on, and so on. Your whole resume, but especially the first few lines, should answer this question: Why should I call you for an interview?

Mistake #2: Lack of Focus

"I hate reading an entire two-page resume and having no idea what the candidate does or what kind of job they seek," says Potter. This can happen when your resume tries to be all things to all people. If you list 10-20 areas of expertise, for example, you're making it hard for readers to figure out what you truly excel at, because it's impossible to do 20 things well. So don't list them all on your resume. "An unclear resume means I can't get that candidate in the door – it's as simple as that," says Potter.

Solution: Give your resume to a neighbor or friend outside of work and ask them to read it. Then ask them two questions: 1) "What have I done before?" and 2) "What kind of job do I want next?" If they can answer clearly, fine. If not, revise the wording until your resume is focused.

Mistake #3: Not Enough Information

"You've got to back up what you say in your resume with your work history and with evidence – specific facts and figures," says Potter. If you don't prove your case, wary employers and recruiters often move on to other candidates – even if you are qualified for the job. Want an example? "I got a resume from a candidate who used one paragraph to describe 16 years at one company. That's not enough. There must be more stories and achievements there," advises Potter.

Solution: Never assume the reader knows what you do on the job. If you're a project manager, for example, describe your most important initiative. How long did it take? Did you make deadline? What were the specific results?

Mistake #4: Too Much Information

You can also hurt your chances by submitting a resume that rambles on for more than two pages or is stuffed with irrelevant information. "If you're applying for a position as a sales manger, for example, the bartending position or the summer job at Dairy Queen should come out of your resume," says Potter.

Solution: Know what to omit from your resume. Every word, every sentence, should build a case for employers to call you over all other candidates. When in doubt, revise or leave out. The aim of your resume is to make the phone ring, not to tell your life story.