

# Resume Content Areas:

The strength of a good resume rests on its selection and presentation of basic content. As you organize your resume, keep in mind the needs of the employer who will be reading. Consider the job and what is required and how your skills match the job description. There are a couple types of resumes: chronological and chrono functional. Schedule an appointment with the Career Coach to determine which best fits you.

**Cover Letter:** Your cover letter is where you can show your passion for the position and the company and highlight your most relevant qualifications. A well-written cover letter will supplement your resume by focusing on why you're a well-qualified candidate for the job. Many employers require cover letters as part of the job application process. However, even when an employer does not explicitly ask for a cover letter, you should send one.

**Objective or Profile:** This is an important part of a resume and should not be overlooked. It informs potential employers of what you are looking for or eligible for and serves as a focal point from which to review and analyze your resume. It should be brief and clearly stated. Don't write a general job objective that reflects what you want from life, such as a "challenging position that will let me learn and increase my skills." Make your objective fit the job you're applying for exactly.

**Education:** Include the full title of your degree (example: Bachelor of Science in Engineering) or the degree you are working toward, institutions attended, date of expected graduation, minors or certifications and GPA. *If you have not completed a full semester at NWOSU, list your High School Graduation information as well.* Once you receive an NWOSU GPA, remove your high school experience.

**(Work) Experience:** Many students have limited work experience but have been involved in internships, volunteer, or camp leadership experience. These experiences are important to the employer and help demonstrate your skills. Be sure to include all significant work experience in reverse chronological order. Describe your work responsibilities with an emphasis on achievements using action words to communicate your skills. List the most important and more closely related responsibilities first.

**Skills:** Hard skills such as computer software, languages (spoken or otherwise), machinery knowledge and certifications will accumulate while at NWOSU. Make sure to list all relevant skills under your work experience.

**Activities, Honors, and Leadership:** These are important categories to include. If the activities involve work or leadership responsibilities, note it in some detail. The employer is interested in the skills you have developed, whether through volunteer or paid experiences. If you were elected to offices or committees, mention it.

# Resume Tips

Potential employers spend a short amount of time looking at your resume - usually less than 10 seconds. The easier the resume is to scan, the better you can hold their attention. You want to make sure to choose a format that allows you to showcase the qualifications that are most relevant to the job post.

Don't know where to start? The career experts suggest considering the essential tips below:

## 1. Tailor your resume

A great resume should be tailored to the job and type of position that you're applying for. You don't have to change every little detail, but the resume itself should reflect the skills and experience that your potential employer would value.

Do a word cloud ([www.tagcrowd.com](http://www.tagcrowd.com)) by cut/paste your resume and visualize, then cut/paste job descriptions and see what words the job emphasizes that you might add to your resume.

Put bullet points after the top introduction that references key items in the job description such as "Strategic Communications", "Training and Development", "Communication Expertise", etc.

## 2. Include your contact information

This is one of the top five resume mistakes people make, according to Harvard career experts.

Always be sure to include your phone number. Do not use parentheses around your area code. That is very outdated. You can use dashes or dots between numbers. Do not put "Cell Phone" or "Home Phone" in front of the number

Always be sure to include your email address. Set up a gmail account just for job applications. It is more professional and helps you locate emails from potential employers easily. Don't put "Email" in front of the email address.

You can go the extra mile by adding your LinkedIn (just make sure it's up to date) or website that showcases examples of your work. Add it under your contact information or in the footer.

What not to include:

- A list of references: You don't even need to put "references available upon request" – hiring managers will ask for this in the hiring process and it is considered very out of date

- A picture: It doesn't matter how strong your selfie game is – including your a photo of yourself makes you look unprofessional and could introduce unconscious bias
- Age or sex: Again, keep it professional. It's a resume, not a Tinder profile

### 3. Use action or power verbs

Your resume is a marketing tool, so stick with action verbs. Avoid flowery and high-level claims like “results-oriented,” “team player,” “excellent communication skills” or “hard worker.”

The goal is to deliver specific information about what you've done in your previous positions that led to measurable results.

One of the errors that will almost guarantee your resume is thrown away is changing verb tenses on bullet points under a specific job.

So, for chronological resumes: Be sure every bullet on your current job begins with a PRESENT TENSE verb (even if you are no longer doing the specific work) and be sure every bullet on your past jobs begins with a PAST TENSE verb.

And for chrono-functional resumes: Be sure every bullet for current or past jobs begin with a PAST TENSE verb

Search "action verbs in resumes" or "power words in resumes" for 200+ examples

Here are a few examples of action verbs that demonstrate certain qualities and skills:

#### **Leadership:**

- ORGANIZED guest lecture series featuring over 40 prominent researchers in the field of sleep medicine
- COORDINATED media campaigns for Facebook, Instagram and Snapchat
- LED over 20 design projects for nonprofits and social enterprises in the U.S., Mexico, India, Zambia and Australia

#### **Communication:**

- PRESENTED monthly, quarterly and annual spending reports to CEO
- COLLABORATED with business teams to streamline production release strategy plans
- DIRECTED implementation of a \$50 million tech project for 10 major U.S. airports (scaled to support over 15,000 employees); increased productivity by 12% and reduced lost baggage expenses by 8%

**Technical:**

- LAUNCHED first paging network across India; managed operations and customer support with a team of 70 customer care agents
- BUILT new checked baggage fees model and projected revenue stream of \$12 million by forecasting changes in passenger baggage check-in behavior
- INSTALLED Macintosh systems for over 30 new hires; trained employees on usage and company computer policies

**Organizational:**

- REDUCED application testing time by 30% by automating shorter testing phases for off-cycle projects
- MONITORED a \$1 billion annual IT budget for 2012 and 2013
- PREPARED sales activity and performance reports; reduced report response time by 50%

## 4. Resumes are about work, not just paid work

You don't have to limit your experience section to paid jobs. Include volunteer positions, internships, and extracurricular activities.

If you do have a paid job experience or relevant internships, list those first with the name of the company, its location and the length of time. Provide 2-3 bullet points highlighting achievements with action verbs during your time in those positions. Include any measurable success you had.

- Select a job title for your unpaid work and list them just as you would a paid job
- Look up job titles on ONET or LinkedIn to see how others describe their jobs
- List each work experience separately (animal shelter, grade school, family manager, etc)

**Don't**

- Never put "Volunteer" in a job title . It diminishes what you have done
- Know that if you have been out of the paid workforce, you are STILL working
- Lump all your unpaid work under one generic title
- Never put "Volunteer" in a job title . It diminishes what you have done
- Even if you have been out of the paid workforce, you are STILL working

## 5. Headings are important

**Top of the Page:**

- Do not put your physical address (you don't want that on the Internet)

- You can put just your city, or just your state or nothing at all
- Your Name should be the largest on the page (bold, larger font)
- List your email (never put a "1" or an "0" because it looks like "L" or "O")
- List your phone (just one number, not home, work, fax)
- Write a short summary of your strengths, skills, values, interest in the job. No more than 5 lines, begin the first sentence with a power word or action word
- Don't put a heading, like "Accounting Manager". This will be in your cover letter

### **WORK/JOB HEADING:**

- PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE, SELECTED ACCOMPLISHMENTS - BOLDED
- List the company name (NOT BOLDED)
- List your job title under the company name (BOLDED)
- List only years worked right justified (list months if you have worked less than a year)
- Always Bold the headings and put them in all caps
- Center justified headings stand out more than right justified headings
- CV resumes have a different layout
- Don't go back more than 10 years on individually listed jobs
- Jobs that are 10+ years summarize in a short paragraph under your other jobs

### **EDUCATION HEADING**

- Can be EDUCATION or EDUCATION/CERTIFICATES or EDUCATION/TRAINING - BOLDED
- List the name of the Institution (NOT BOLDED)List your degree (BOLDED)
- List highest degree first
- List Credentials or Certificates after degrees
- Education is listed at the top of the page, before Professional Experience, only if you graduated from college in the last 12 months, otherwise, under Experience

### **COMMUNITY OUTREACH (VOLUNTEER)**

- List positions you have held in volunteer opportunities
- List teaching, mentoring, etc you have done that is unpaid
- List sport, instrument, theatrical, etc coaching or managing

## **6. Make it presentable and easy to follow**

Your hiring manager's time is valuable, and a resume that's all over the place isn't worth reading all the way through. Typically, hiring managers spend 7 seconds on a resume.

### **Do:**

- Be consistent in format and content

- Balance white space
- Use consistent spacing, underlining, italics, bold and capitalization for emphasis
- List headings in order of importance
- Within headings, list information in reverse chronological order (most recent first)
- Make sure your formatting will translate properly if you converted to a PDF
- Keep it to just one page if you are just beginning your first job. If you have worked or had internships, you can make it two pages.

**Don't:**

- Forget to proofread
- Use italics as they are hard to read
- Use a narrative style
- Use personal pronouns ("I...") **Can be used in certain circumstances**
- Start each line with a date **Dates should be right justified**
- Abbreviate **(an M.S degree looks strange - write out Master of Science)**
- Use an elaborate template with too many colors
- Use canva to create your resume

## 7.) Write for an Applicant Tracking System

As we increase in technology, more and more jobs are requiring that you submit a job application and resume through an online tracking system called the ATS.

ATS is a software used by companies to review, rank, and sort applications received for a job or internship posting. It prioritizes and ranks resumes according to their use of the specified keywords related to the job post. Resumes with the least amount of Keywords or not formatted for an ATS are ranked lowest. Here are some tips:

- Review the job description to identify character traits and skills needed to be successful in the role.
- Collect a list of keywords from the listed preferred and required qualifications in the job descriptions.
- Use standard headings such as “experience,” “skills,” and “education,” and your resume.
- Avoid complex formatting and using features such as images, columns, tables, headers and footers.
- Submit a word document - NOT a PDF so ATS can scan this format properly.
- Make multiple resumes.

## 8.) List Relevant Skills

- When an employer reviews your resume, they are looking to understand WHY you would make a valuable addition to their team.
- Listing your skills is a way to quickly communicate your ability to succeed in the role.
- Include a combination of hard skills, which are abilities you learn through education and experience like software programs or foreign languages, and soft-skills, which are personality traits and skills you can apply to any job like problem-solving and time-management.
- Be sure to review the job description to identify the skills and behaviors needed to be successful.

### TEN EXAMPLES OF THE BEST RESUME SKILLS

- Active listening skills - the ability to focus completely on the person you're communicating with.
- Communication skills - abilities you use when giving and receiving different kinds of information.
- Computer skills - involve the ability to learn and operate various technologies.
- Customer Service skills - traits and practices that help you address customers need to create a positive experience.
- Interpersonal skills - important to work efficiently with others, solve problems and lead projects and teams.
- Leadership skills - require you to motivate others to complete tasks and reach milestones - often according to a schedule.
- Management skills - qualities that help you govern both tasks and people. Organized empathetic and communicates clearly to support a team.
- Problem solving skills - enable you to determine the root of a problem and quickly find an effective solution for all parties involved.
- Time Management skills - allow you to complete tasks and projects before deadlines while also maintaining a work-life balance.
- Transferable skills - qualities that are useful to any employer as you change jobs or even careers. Often include soft skills like flexibility, organization, and teamwork.

For additional resume help and feedback, contact our Career Coach or stop by Ryerson Hall 145. You can also visit [www.resumeworded.com](http://www.resumeworded.com) to score your resume and receive actionable steps and improve your resume.

# Electronic Resumes

An electronic resume may take two forms: 1.) the submission of a resume to a designated website, talent bank, or social media site, and 2.) the submission of a resume as an attachment to an email message submitted to a specific individual or email address.

When submitting resumes to online databases, it's worthwhile to periodically review and update a resume that's been posted. This keeps it "fresh" and more likely to surface in database searches.

Save several copies of your resume in different formats. Suggested formats are .docx, .pdf, and .txt. Most everyone can open a .pdf, but not everyone can open a .docx.

## Tips:

- Develop your standard resume FIRST.
- After saving a copy of your standard resume and creating a working copy of your electronic resume, do the following:
  - remove all graphics such as bold, italics, underlines, tabs, centering, numbers, bullets, or any other stylistic formats. CAPITALIZATION and position (the order of your resume) are the only acceptable graphics unless using a .pdf for format.
- all text should be left justified; the font should be Arial, Veranda, Tahoma, or Times New Roman.
- Consider using a keyword summary so that the resume is more likely to be selected if subject to electronic scan by keyword or loaded into a database searchable by keywords.
- Find out what will happen to your resume after they submit it electronically. If it's put into a database, will it be removed after a period of time? Will you be informed when a job matches your background? Will you have an opportunity to update your resume?
- Follow up with an original, mailed version unless the employer indicates that paper copies shouldn't be sent.
- PROOF YOUR RESUME.



# Cover Letters

A cover letter is a one-page document you submit with your resume. It is a supplement to your resume, a movie trailer if you will, to your resume. You don't want to just repeat your resume information on your cover letter. Employers and hiring managers will determine whether or not they read your resume based on your cover letter - but don't exaggerate on your cover letter.

Here's the structure of a cover letter:

- 1.) Contact details
- 2.) An introduction of yourself
  - a.) Personal information
  - b.) What job you're applying for
  - c.) Where you're applying
  - d.) Why you're applying
- 3.) The Body of Your Cover Letter
  - a.) Story behind your achievements
    - i.) You want to be as factual as possible
    - ii.) Use metrics if possible to show off your achievements
  - b.) Talk about how you'll benefit the company - not how they'll benefit you.
- 4.) Conclusion
  - a.) Mention your future plans
  - b.) Thank the reader and conclude with a request to meet in person

# Cover Letter Example

Use the heading from your resume for your contact information

Mr./Ms. Name

Title

Company

Street Address

City, State, Zip Code

Dear Mr./Ms. Name:

The first paragraph is your introduction and should be three to four sentences long. Name the position for which you are applying and indicate how you learned of the opening. State briefly why you are interested in the organization or what you know about the organization. Try to get the reader's attention. You might mention a name or refer to an article, event, or experience that led you to make this contact.

The body of your letter should be one or two paragraphs in length. This is an opportunity to outline your qualifications and skills as they relate to the job. However, do not repeat all the information on your resume. Select one or two of your most important qualifications for the position, and elaborate on the information, slanting your remarks to the employer's point of view. Give concise evidence of your functional skills and of the qualities you possess. When responding to a job announcement, include the requirements listed in the announcement to facilitate the task of matching you to the job. Refer the reader to your enclosed resume.

The final paragraph is your closing. Make a specific request for an interview. Make sure your closing is not vague but makes a specific action from the reader likely. Thank the reader for taking the time to read your letter.

Sincerely yours,

(Your signature)

Your typewritten name

Enclosure (Indicates your resume is in the envelope with your letter)

## Personal Statements:

This is the most important and powerful work that you will do, and it's a statement you will use for the remainder of your life. Your Personal Statement defines YOUR unique core values and strengths that you bring to any situation. You can use it on your resume, in interviews, your LinkedIn, and in other areas when someone asks you to tell them about yourself. In career development, it's important to know who you are before you decide what you want to do.

- 1.) Begin by taking the FREE VIA Character Strengths Survey [here](#), writing down the top 5 results.
- 2.) Write a paragraph for each strength/value that describes them in your own words and how you use it with others.
- 3.) Highlight 2-5 key words in each paragraph that you want to say about yourself. These highlighted words can be helpful in listing your skills on your resume or in interviews.
- 4.) Say your personal statement OUT LOUD! This will help you become more confident in who you are, helping you own your place in interviews!

### Personal Statement Example:

FIRST, I am a **strategic thinker** and **pacesetter** for teams and organizations, utilizing key characteristics of **leadership** to help team members define long term goals and short term, measurable goals. I enjoy paving the way for others in the organization to **courageously** step forward and be the best they can be.

SECOND, I am a **life-long learner** and continuously improve my **knowledge** so I can help others understand a situation or subject in a unique way. This presents me with the opportunity to expand my thinking to a new level.

THIRD, I enjoy **evaluating** operating systems extensively for any areas of improvement and **exploring creative avenues** for potential opportunities. This allows me to clearly define the most effective way the team can reach their desired goals.

FOURTH, I am passionate about speaking the **truth** and I value **confidentiality** and **dependability** as I am often sought out for advice on how to proceed. These key characteristics allow me to remain **ethical** and **trustworthy** and act as a touchstone for others as they evaluate their decisions.

FIFTH, I am a catalyst for **genuine relationships**. I help build bridges between personalities by helping others see uniqueness rather than differences. My ability to **mentor** and provide **honest feedback** allows me to encourage others as individuals and create solid relationships.

# Action Verbs

accelerated	constructed	explained	measured	reproduced
accomplished	contacted	explored	mediated	researched
achieved	continued	facilitated	modeled	resolved
acquired	contracted	figured	modified	responded
activated	convened	financed	molded	restored
adapted	conveyed	focused	monitored	retained
adjusted	coordinated	forecasted	motivated	retrieved
administered	corresponded	formed	named	reviewed
advised	counseled	formulated	negotiated	revised
allocated	created	fostered	observed	rewrote
analyzed	critiqued	founded	obtained	routed
annotated	decided	functioned	operated	scheduled
anticipated	defined	generated	ordered	searched
applied	delegated	governed	organized	selected
appraised	delivered	grouped	originated	served
arranged	demonstrated	guided	outlined	shaped
articulated	derived	helped	oversaw	shared
assembled	designed	identified	perceived	showed
assessed	detected	illustrated	performed	simplified
assigned	determined	immunized	persuaded	solicited
authored	developed	implemented	planned	solved
balanced	devised	improved	planted	specified
briefed	directed	increased	presented	spoke
budgeted	distributed	informed	presided	stimulated
built	drafted	initiated	printed	structured
cataloged	edited	instituted	produced	studied
categorized	educated	instructed	protected	supervised
chaired	effected	interpreted	provided	supported
clarified	elicited	interviewed	publicized	synthesized
cleared	encouraged	introduced	questioned	targeted
coded	established	invented	raised	taught
collaborated	evaluated	investigated	recommended	tested
compared	examined	judged	recorded	trained
compiled	executed	led	recruited	translated
completed	exhibited	listened	reduced	tutored
composed	expanded	maintained	rendered	updated
computed	expedited	managed	repaired	utilized
conducted	experienced	marketed	reported	verified
consolidated	experimented	mastered	represented	wrote

# Cover Letter Checklist

**STOP! Don't submit your cover letter until you have completed the following:**

- Does your cover letter heading include all essential information?
  - Full name
  - Professional Email
  - Phone Number
  - Date
  - Relevant Social Media
- Do you address the correct person (i.e., the hiring manager or future direct supervisor)
- Does your introductory paragraph grab the reader's attention?
  - Did you mention 2-3 of your top achievements?
  - Did you use numbers and facts to back up your experience where possible?
- Did you convey that you're the right one for the job?
  - Did you identify core requirements?
  - Did you convey how your experiences help you fit the requirements?
- Did you convince the hiring manager that you're passionate about the company?
  - Did you identify 3 things you like about the company that aren't generic?
- Did you end with a Call-to-Action and correct formal closure?

**Be careful not to...**

- Make your introduction long winded or forget to include your job objective to cause confusion about what your applying for.
- Forget to proofread your letter or use spell check.
- Write a great deal about your experiences without explaining why they are relevant. Do provide details that will let the employer know you understand what their company does or what the job entails.
- Write more than one page, forcing employers to hunt for your qualifications.
- Explain what the employer can do for you, instead of what you can do for them.
- Send the same generic cover letter to all employers.

# Resume Checklist

- Are your name, address, city, state, zip code, phone number and email address at the top of the page?
- Is the resume pleasing to the eye with an easy-to-read font size and typeface, and an easy-to-follow layout? Can an employer learn the basics about you with a 10 second glance at it?
- Did you use bullets, bold, all capitals, and/or underlining to highlight the parts you want to emphasize (e.g., job titles)?
- Did you tailor your resume for the position by including key skills and experiences the employer wants?
- Is information listed in order of importance and relevance to the requirements listed in the job description?
- Does the resume avoid generalities and provide specific information about context, actions taken, and results?
- Have you been accurate and truthful about your accomplishments rather than being too modest or exaggerating?
- Did you check the spelling of every word and make sure the grammar and punctuation are correct?
- If you know your resume will be scanned, did you omit columns, underlining, and bullets?
- Have you had the LASSO Center critique it?
- If you were the employer, would you call for an interview?

## DO:

- Draft a clear and well-organized document.
- Bachelor's candidate resumes should be no more than two pages of relevant information.
- Check the spelling of every word and ensure there are no errors. Customize the content for the organization of the opportunity.
- Describe duties and accomplishments in bullets.
- Keep formatting consistent throughout the document.

## DON'T:

- Include a picture or personal information such as weight, height, marital status, SSN, race, age, and religion.
- Use personal pronouns such as I, me, or my.
- Start bullet points with "Responsible for" or "Duties included."
- State current or previous salaries unless explicitly instructed to do so.
- Have any misspelled words or poor grammar. Proofread your document.
- Don't use Canva to create your Resume.