

Selling Yourself on Paper – The Resume

Your resume is an important component in the job search equation. It is the key to the company's door—granting you the first face-to-face contact with a potential employer. So, where do you begin? How can you present your skills in a way that will effectively show an employer that you're the candidate for the job?

These are some of the questions you must answer as you continue on the road to re-employment. From stating your objective to describing your skills, this information sheet will outline some tips for creating an attractive resume.

Narrowing Your Focus

Ten to thirty seconds ... That's how long a typical employer will spend scanning your resume. What can you do to make it "stand out in the pile"? Whether you're starting from scratch or updating your resume, remember that the employer will be looking for a match between the skills needed to do the job and your experience. Therefore, tailor your qualifications and accomplishments to the job for which you are applying. Here are some standard guidelines:

→ **Sell the reader in the top half**—If there is an objective, it should be simply stated with the particular employment opportunity in mind. Your strongest skills and qualifications should also be listed at the top of the page in a skills summary or in the first job description. Make it easy for an employer scanning your resume to pick out position titles and companies. Disorganized or scattered information is hard to follow and will lose the reader.

→ **Describe your most recent work experience**—Detail your last three to five positions, or employment covering the last ten years. Only summarize positions very early in your work history if they are exceptionally relevant to the job for which you are applying.

→ **Make your accomplishments stand out**—Anyone reading your resume should be able to determine your accomplishments by scanning your work history. Do not bog the reader down with less important points or repeat details that are common to several positions. An overwritten resume—including long paragraphs and sentences—takes too long to read and says too little.



→ **Create a resume with "eye-appeal"**—Your resume should have a clean, professional appearance, with plenty of space between paragraphs. Do not cram too much information onto one page or try too hard with fancy typesetting or exotic paper stock.

→ **Use action words to describe your accomplishments**—Some examples include: analyzed, conducted, designed, examined, initiated, managed, operated, proposed and supervised.

→ **Proof your resume carefully**—Avoid misspellings, typographical errors and poor grammar. Make sure you have at least two different people edit it before it is printed and mailed.

Preparing a Resume Check List

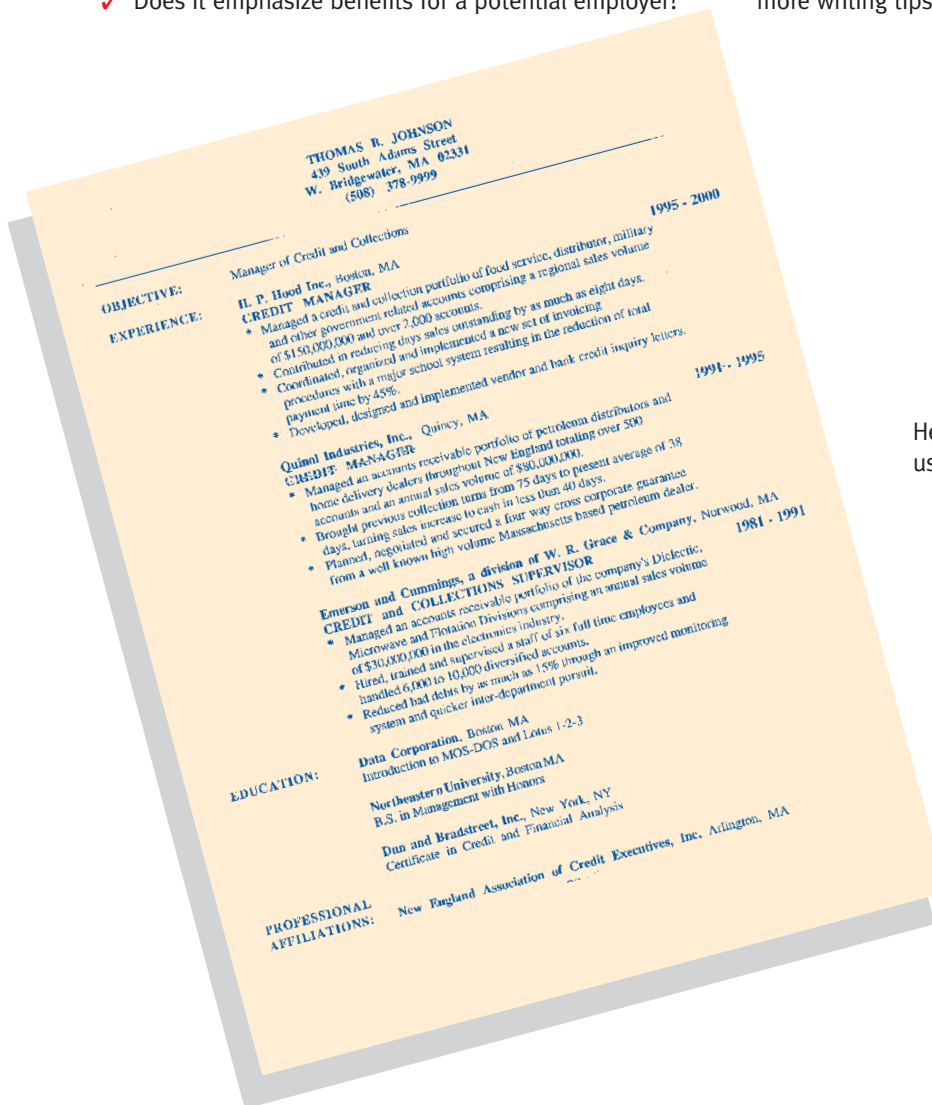
Once you have completed a draft of your resume, ask yourself the following questions:

- ✓ Is my resume error free? (typing errors, spelling or poor word usage)
- ✓ Is the objective statement focused, but not too narrow?
- ✓ Are there quantitative terms used to stress accomplishments i.e., dollars in sales, years of experience, etc.?
- ✓ Does it stress accomplishments over skills and duties?
- ✓ Is the language clear and understandable?
- ✓ Is irrelevant personal information left out?
- ✓ Does it emphasize benefits for a potential employer?

- ✓ Does it make the reader want to read it?
- ✓ Is it well printed on good, professional-looking stock?
- ✓ Does the layout invite attention?
- ✓ Do strong points stand out?
- ✓ Is the industry/product lines of past employers clear?
- ✓ Do the sentences begin with action words?
- ✓ Does it sell the writer's problem-solving skills?

Making the Commitment

Creating an effective resume is critical to your job search. It's the tool that will sell you and your experience to a prospective employer. So, make it work for you! DCS's *Job Search Journal, Resume Guide* and other publications are on hand in this One-Stop Career Center. A variety of workshops are also available, to provide you with more writing tips and effective sample resumes.



Here's a sample of the most commonly used format—the **chronological resume**.