# PART III

# DEVELOPING YOUR JOB SEARCH TOOLS



HIRE ME!

T he focus of Parts I and II was goal-setting. You have now spent considerable time assessing your basic values, interests, personal qualities, and skills. You should also be extremely aware of your actual career alternatives now.

Hopefully you have integrated your assessment and your exploration and have established some specific direction(s) for your career. The purpose of Part III is to show you how to achieve your career plans and goals.

Part III helps you develop a plan to meet your objectives. The recommended strategies build upon those of "Planning Your Career" and "Exploring Your Options." Each strategy or technique sets into motion an approach that has worked for thousands of others, and the approach will also work for you.

# Developing Your Job Search Tools

## Career Education Websites

You have been introduced to many websites that allow you to explore potential career options like these listed below. They play an important role in your career education. They lead to to extensive research regarding careers available to someone with your interests.

A sound strategic career plan will integrate your self-perceptions with a view of the world that you feel best matches your career needs. The results of your self-assessment and career exploration boils down to three to five specific career options that must get further refined to specific jobs.

The subsequent job search is a tactical set of actions that you used to get a job. Tools and tactics are short range in nature. Your focus in parts I and II was long-range. Part III introduces you to an ever-changing set of ideas that will be extremely valuable to you in the short run but will change over time.
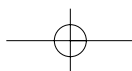
Before you move forward to *tactics,* you may want to review the following websites that helped to narrow your interest to specific job descriptions. You are now ready to look at new tactics in the actual job search process.
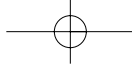
The websites listed below will lead you to many other websites that will assist in developing your job search tools.

**The Riley Guide**                                    ***www.rileyguide.com***
What It Is—The Riley Guide serves you in two ways: 1) It is a directory of employment and career information sources and services on the Internet; and 2) It provides instruction for jobseekers and recruiters on how to use the Internet to their best advantage. The Riley Guide isn't a place to post job announcements nor resumes. There are hun-

dreds of links to places that will do this for you. You will find useful articles, help with follow-up letters, job interview advice, networking tips, and much more

**Indiana University Education**   *www.Indiana.edu/~libugls/instruction/x420.htm*
I.U. Libraries, in cooperation with the Career Planning Strategies course, presents a list of outstanding resources related to career planning and job search research. This is a listing of external links to research resources that provide you access to contact names, addresses, company information, and other useful career-related information.

**JobWeb**                                              *www.jobweb.com*
Your on-line complement to the *Job Choices* magazine series from the National Association of colleges and employers for undergraduates. JobWeb is a robust, all-inclusive resource. JobWeb opens a page FULL of links to specialized On-line Career Fairs, Resumes & Interviews, Career Development (which contains assessment and exploration tools), Internships/Co-ops, Salary Info, Job Market Research, and After College. Contains a tremendous amount of career information.

## Tactical Job Search Tools

A large sea change occurred in job search strategies around the year 2000 with the massive introduction of websites and new technologies into job search tools and tactics. The web changed the mix of tools used to approach employers.
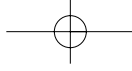
**Employer Changes.** Many of the larger, more enlightened employers now expect you to visit their own career websites. In fact. great efforts are made to drive you to their website through their employment advertising. Many no longer ask you to send a cover letter and resume or visit their offices. They direct you to www.(employer name).com/careers. Why?

There are many reasons for employers wanting to move you to complete your application on-line. These include legal ramifications, fairness considerations, efficiency, application processing, on-line selection instruments, resume reviews, internal resume sharing, job market analysis, integration with applicant tracking systems, new employee orientation scheduling, future employee database construction, etc.

Annually, this web tool finds ways to further save the employer money. This web tool enhances the competency selection process so properly trained talent enters the employer's talent pool. Internal on-line job postings can enhance promotional decisions. Employers can maintain an up-to-date competency portfolio, provide new training, review promotions, conduct and record performance reviews, etc., on-line.
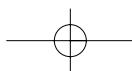
**Society Benefits.** Society benefits if this "matching of competencies" continues to enhance job performance and lowers unemployment by quickly identifying talented applicants. Costs continually get cut, which over time lowers costs and makes products and services more cost competitive on a global basis.

Technology has special benefits to smaller midsize employers, and even for entrepreneurs, who can now go to large job boards for talent acquisition. Recruiting the "best and brightest" used to be nearly the sole province of the large firms who could afford extensive on-campus college recruiting programs and company job fairs. The web has created a more competitive talent sourcing pool. Of course, the large global firms can also still use tools like targeted websites and monster-size job boards, but the job market has been made more competitive with these new tools.

The job marketplace has the potential to become even more effective and efficient for all size and types of employers and entrepreneurs. On-line selection tools and inexpensive job listings and free resume postings clearly have impacted how American employers and employees interact with each other.

**Your Productivity Tool.** You need a *career planning strategy* that moves you into a powerful position. How can you take advantage of these new, ever-emerging technology tools that are reshaping how you visit the job marketplace?

This new technology does not change every tool. You still need tools like cover letters. resumes, interviewing skills, competency communication vehicles, etc. Those tools may be greatly enhanced with the application of technology as employers move to on-line applications, resumes, cover e-mails, selection tests, behavioral interviews, and even on-line reference checking. Progress, if that is the correct word, is constantly creating techniques that you need to include in your strategic career planning process.
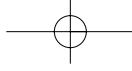
You need to join and embrace this new technology as you adjust your tactical plan. Your short-term job search use of technology will foster your long-term career plan and life success.

**On-line Applications.** Like most changes, this presents some challenges and opportunities. The transition and use of technology is not a difficult adjustment, especially for recent college graduates. The new consolidated websites teach and help you in the use of this tool set.

Even the small and midsize employers are making it easy for you to visit and apply for jobs on-line. The selection instruments built into employer web sites has reduced the number of interviews needed. Many more candidates are excluded from the interview because of electronic upfront selection instruments. You may never get to the interview process if you do not meet the set of competencies required in the job description. You will have submitted your talents via some type of web database when you applied for the job.
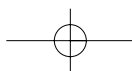
**Interview Selection Tactics.**  This means that, given the interviews that you do take, your competition is keen. Nearly all "pre-selected" candidates are qualified based upon the credentials and qualifications, which can be objectively defined in the employer's job description. This makes communicating your personal qualities in the live interview much more important.

Selling your job-related skills in a competitive interview situation, where your competitors for the job have exactly the same skills, is not worth taking valuable interview time to discuss. You must move quickly into a discussion of your values, interests, and personal qualities as they relate to the job instead of emphasizing your valuable skills, given that all other candidates have those same skills.

Just as your on-line cover e-mail, resume, and other printed tools have been enhanced. you need to change how you communicate in your interviews. Each interview becomes an extremely viable asset. What do you estimate the monetary value of each of your interviews to be? The value, compared to pre-technology days, has certainly increased, especially since you are likely to get to take fewer interviews.
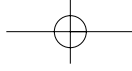
**Networking Impacts.**  Networking has always been the number one way that you use to find interviews. Technology has even changed how you start your networking. Informational interviews are no longer "off-the-cuff," "wing it," "from the gut" conversations. They are *planned* events that lead to the use of technology in recording, maintaining, and nurturing career important people contacts.

Before you begin creating your job search tools, spending some valuable time using some of these new tools is very important. Many of the larger well-known job search web sites are listed below. A good strategic career plan needs to go beyond impulsively communicating electronically with resources like these.

You need to visit individual employer websites to see how your data will be collected. Somehow, you need to ensure that your information is going to get communicated to the proper person inside the organization. Your networking follow-ups are thus going to be very important and possibly quite different than they would have been several years ago.

**Electronic Coaches.**  You need the advice given on the monster websites and this book. You need to learn how to best search for specific types of jobs. Efficient and effective job surfing on any site requires finesse gained from browsing experience. Uploading your resume is not as simple as it appears. Should it be basic text, HTML, MS word, or PDF? Just how much information should you initially upload? Should you even post your private information on a website? How important is the on-line database that each job board and employer website requires you to submit? How important is the database in virtual job fairs?
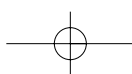
Start browsing and submitting partially completed applications but refrain from hitting the submit button. Before you read about the upcoming concepts regarding resumes, cover letters, behavioral based interviews, database entry, informational interviews, networking, etc., try to identify the specific competencies needed for the job in which you are interested. Then observe, as you browse, how credentials are going to be evaluated electronically by the employers on their website or by third-party sites, which will later refer you to employers.

Once you understand what employers are seeking in your career field and in the specific job opening, the redefinition and presentation of your talents will become more relevant.

Do not just browse the huge job boards. Also, investigate your job interests in the smaller career-focused websites. Especially, review the jobs listed in nonprofit professional and trade associations that are relevant to your career field. Many of the sites allow their members to post jobs with complete job descriptions for you to read.

Given the change in technology, website consolidations, and website closings, you do not want to rely on only a few of these large popular websites described below. These are likely to again change over time. You are best advised to visit websites of specific employers. You often can navigate to the specific employer websites from other websites and professional association websites. Do not place an over-reliance on any one type of website. Changes occur frequently.

**Informational Interview Contacts.** Networking will continue to play a major role in your future job search tactics. The websites of associations and trade groups will help you identify leaders in your career field who have the best potential to help you. These people, not just systems, will direct you to potential employers. Membership lists and directories will aid in your networking activities from these websites.

Use these popular websites as partners in your career plans. Be flexible and recognize their value. Changes are constantly occurring. Improvements are ongoing. Revisiting sites that earlier looked unproductive may later prove useful.

**Website Activities.** Most websites will allow you to post your resume, search for jobs in your field, and offer career search advice. Websites are tactical tools in your job search arsenal. Put this tactical process in perspective to your long-term career planning strategies. Your strategy should drive your tactics not the other way around.

Whether or not you find your perfect job lead listed on a given website, the advice that website articles may give regarding job searching can be quite useful. Interviewing, however it is structured to reveal your competencies, will be the most important part of your job search. The materials that follow this introduction to the monster job boards are the "strategic" messages that will make your use of these websites more productive. Websites help you prepare
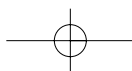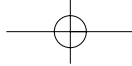
for your interviews from a tactical perspective. Part III will provide you with a strategic mission that will drive your tactics.

Start Browsing. Use these enormous job search engines and tools only after you have read about the strategies that follow. Anyone can shoot a basketball but only training, practice, and a sound plan will produce positive results. Once you learn about enhancing the quality of your tools and are trained on how to use them properly, these websites will bring the **value** that you need. Study the following chapters before you damage the job leads and networking contacts that websites deliver to you. Reviewing these websites initially is akin to reading the rules on how to play basketball. The rules are given. There are both good and bad teams who follow the same rule book.

You want to be a star on a great team. The materials to follow will help you hone your tactical job search tools. The secret to real success lies in the knowledge that comes from the creation of a sound career planning strategy.

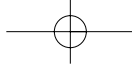**CareerBuilder.com**                                    *www.careerbuilder.com*

The CareerBuilder Network offers a world of opportunity to job seekers by providing access to millions of jobs throughout the Internet—all tailored to one's individual search. With the *my careerbuilder* service, you can easily manage your entire career building experience when you receive instant e-mail updates on job leads, a job leads folder to store your favorite job prospects, and the ability to post and manage several resumes (including the ability to block resumes from being viewed by designated companies) and a cover letter. Tap into a "one-stop search experience" by using the *Mega Job Search* tool, which provides access to jobs on other leading career sites or go to the *Virtual Skills Center* that includes many tools and resources to enhance and validate the skills of the career-minded professional.

**Monster**                                              *www.monster.com*

Monster.com is a career network that job seekers can use to expand their careers, providing continuous access to the most progressive companies, as well as interactive, personalized tools to make the process effective and convenient. Features include: My Monster, resume management, a personal job search agent, a careers network containing a global link to many different countries, chats and message boards, privacy options, expert advice on job-seeking and career management and free newsletters. Specialized links to MonsterTRAK, which is targeted toward college students/graduates, ChiefMonster for those senior executives, and Monster Talent Market designed specifically for "free agents."
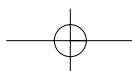
### Yahoo! hotjobs                    *hotjobs.yahoo.com*

Sign up for a free "myHotJobs Profile" and create an on-line resume, control the privacy of your resume by blocking specific employers from viewing it (namely, your current one), set up automatic job search agents, track your job applications, and view your Resume statistics. You can also view jobs sorted by location, title, date of posting, and then link directly to the real job description. Use the advanced search feature to search on keyword, company, or location. Also offers a message board, an excellent career magazine, and a unique career fair.

### Career Journal                    *www.careerjournal.com*

This is the *Wall Street Journal's* entry into the recruiting market and is geared toward executives. This site has a very effective alliance with one of the largest executive search firms in the world. It also contains a listing of executive recruiters and has alliances with several human resource associations. Charges a fee to employers to post jobs but allows free viewing of the jobs posted, which can be searched by keyword, company, or location. There are many high-quality articles with career advice and salary surveys to keep job seekers informed about career management issues.

### America's Job Bank                    *www.ajb.dni.us*

AJB is a partnership between the U.S. Department of Labor and the state operated public employment Service. As you may expect, AJB gets its job listings from federal government openings and state public employment agencies. You can define searches by location, highly specific job function, or keyword phrases. Other links are available to variety of public and private employment pages. America's Job Bank does have application options and contact addresses. Best of all, this service is FREE!

### CollegeJobBoard                    *www.collegejobboard.com*

A job board for everyone; for students and alumni of every college, university, graduate school, and vocational and adult education school in the United States. CollegeJobBoard is designed to help students and alumni find internships, temporary jobs, part-time jobs and full-time jobs. Key features: Create up to five on-line resumes and cover letters to use to apply to jobs; activate your resume so employers can view it, or store it privately for your own use; track your on-line job applications; create automatic Job Search Agents that will search around the clock and e-mail you when a job listing matches your criteria; utilize the Free Scholarship search engine; review job search tips; and research companies.
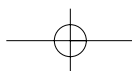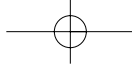
### College Grad                                    *www.collegegrad.com*

CollegeGrad.com targets college students and recent grads exclusively; is linked to by many colleges and universities; provides entry-level job search content to job seekers and job views; collects candidates and applications for job postings. The site contains more than 10,000 job postings, 140 resume templates, a searchable employer data-base, and the entire contents of the book, "College Grad Job Hunter" on-line for free.

### CollegeRecruiter                              *www.CollegeRecruiter.com*

CollegeRecruiter.com is used by 400,000 job seekers per month to help them find new internships, seasonal employment, part-time positions, full-time work, and career opportunities. You can post a resume, manually search the thousands of current job postings or set up a job search agent to do the work for you, instantly zap your resume to over 10,000 top recruiters through the resume distribution service, and solicit help writing cover letters and "tweaking" your resume. And review one of the most exten-sive on-line libraries of free articles related to employment and educational opportuni-ties. With a new article added every weekday, you can search the article database and receive a free e-mailed newsletter.

### Monster Trax                                    *www.monstertrax.com*

This alliance monster.com and colleges publishes hundreds of job leads specifically for selected students and alums at hundreds of universities. Owned by Monster.com and offered as a special service for recent college graduates and employers who prefer to hire relatively inexperienced college graduates for training programs at the entry level.

### Careers in Business                         *www.careers-in-business.com*

Careers in Business is designed to help you find a satisfying job in the business world, whether you're angling for a fast-track investment banking job or a fulfilling non-profit career. This site brings you the latest scoop on various business career areas including jobs, salaries, what people are saying and entry requirements. The resources here are most appropriate for business students exploring various career options in business.
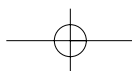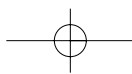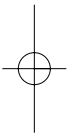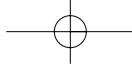
CHAPTER 10

# RESUME PREPARATION TECHNIQUES:
## Purpose – Strategy – Design

### What factors should I consider in preparing my resume?

*The resume is your sales brochure.*

The resume is the most important tool in your effort to find a job. In the final analysis, it is a sales brochure designed to present your capabilities in the most favorable light to potential employers. You need to learn the secrets of developing a piece of paper that is designed to sell your potential to employers.

With millions of resumes in circulation, you would think that there would be no secrets. Yet, hundreds of HR professionals say that the lack of an effective resume is the number one reason why they turn people away before the interview.

The basic idea is to structure the resume in such a way that the potential employer is convinced that you are the ideal candidate for an available opening. "Broad brush" resumes that simply chronologize the facts about you are seldom effective.

Sending out bland resumes indiscriminately is like shooting in the dark: You may get lucky, but luck is not an effective approach to use after a major investment in your education.

*Targeted resumes are most effective in getting interviews.*

The basic idea in resume design is to structure it in such a way that it convinces the potential employer that you are the perfect match for a position that is open or anticipated.

A resume is an individually designed document that summarizes your background. It is intended to demonstrate your fitness for a particular position or array of related positions. It is your passport to job interviews.

The resume is your most important communication tool and it is close to impossible to land an assignment of a technical, professional, or managerial type without one.

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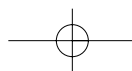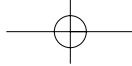
## The One-Minute Resume

The competitive reality of the job market dictates that there are many qualified applicants for every job opening. An employer obviously prefers to interview several candidates for each opening, not just a single applicant. There rarely is enough time to interview every technically qualified applicant. Who gets through the sixty-second resume scan?

A targeted resume increases your odds of getting the interview appointment. Over 95 percent of job hires are first introduced via a resume. This marketing brochure is the single most important tool in your job search.

*Your resume is your passport to job interviews.*

The resume focuses attention on the most attractive and applicable aspects of your background. It forces the reader to conclude that you are an ideal applicant for a given assignment.

The purpose of the resume is to obtain a job interview; it is not designed to get you a job offer. All you want is a chance to tell your story in person and to elaborate on your qualifications.

The resume opens the door, but it does not close the sale. Targeted resumes focus on your goals, interests, and motivations. They explain *why* you have confidence in your abilities.

Resumes are used in many ways. Distribution strategies boil down to the following uses:

**Networking.** Making contact with all friends and friends of friends who are in a position to assist in arranging an interview.

**Informational Interviewing.** Making contact with individuals employed in the field you desire with the expressed purpose of data collection, but realizing that these contacts may eventually produce job interviews. Networking and informational interviewing provide you access to the "hidden job market."

**Web-based Follow-ups.** After searching on-line job boards and employer websites, you need to e-mail your credentials to the potential employer.

**Advertisements.** Responding to "help wanted" ads that offer access to about 15 percent of the available job openings.

**Mail Campaigns.** Targeting cover letters with resumes to employers most likely to have openings in your area of interest.

**Cold Calling.** Contacting personnel and operating managers directly to inquire about employment possibilities.
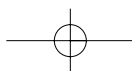
**Third-Party Assistance.** Arranging with agencies to set up interview appointments for you.

Ample advice on timing the approach, meeting the right person, and interview positioning dominate popular thought on the use of these approaches. The one thing all strategies have in common is the need for a quality resume.

# Preparation Techniques

Many employers receive hundreds of resumes each day from many sources. The time they have available for reviewing them is quite short; rarely more than a cursory one or two minutes each.

Consequently, an employer absorbs a great deal of information about you in those few seconds. You must direct attention to the few items that are most likely to positively influence their decision.

**Goals.** The goal is to get your resume read in great detail. The odds are against getting it read completely. It is only by knowing what the employer is seeking and then directing your resume to fit those criteria that you have a reasonable chance of getting your resume read more thoroughly.

**Matching.** The concept of matching key competencies means that you must deliver your resume to the right decision-maker. The decision-maker who makes the first cut is most likely screening for skills, career interest, major subject, degree level, and job titles. These are the items that must stand out first and foremost on your resume. Make sure that the specifications mentioned in the ads are obvious.
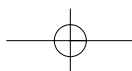
**Door Opener.** The employer will not hire you on the basis of your resume alone; it merely serves to whet the employer's appetite. The employer wants to set up an interview with you. Although the resume is a critical step in the job search process, it can only be relied upon to open a door. To move ahead, prove that you are qualified.

## Use of Resumes

There are many good reasons for writing your resume. Each new resume is the foundation for the creation of subsequent resumes. The resume will follow you for years. Whether in the job market or not, you should always maintain an up-to-date resume.

There are many good nonemployment uses of your resume—from the time when you want to secure bank credit to when you need to provide information for speech introductions. Your intended use influences design considerations.

A good resume packages your credentials in a manner that will convince a potential employer that you must be interviewed. The sales-oriented resume focuses attention on the most attractive and applicable aspects of your background. It forces the reader to conclude that you are an ideal applicant for a given assignment.

### Resume Uses

- Calling card for multiple circumstances
- Servicing academic and work references
- Conversing with counselors
- Disseminating to network contacts
- Responding to job leads
- Introducing to employment agencies
- Answering employment advertisements
- Broadcasting to potential employers
- Web calling card

**Figure 10.1**

*The purpose of your resume is to introduce you. It is not your total sales presentation.*

Because the resume is a sales presentation, it must truly reflect all of your credentials in an honest, truthful, and professional manner. How do you intend to use your resume?

## Cold Calling Card.
Cold calling involves making personal visits to a number of potential employers. You are hoping that even though you had no formal appointment, you will be able to speak with an employment decision-maker.

This is a frustrating way to look for a job because there is a very high probability of rejection. Nonetheless, it does occasionally work.

A good resume can greatly improve your odds of obtaining the interview. If there is an opening and if your background fits, you often will get an interview then or an appointment time for one later.

Unlike the ad response where you know an opening exists, you are gambling on an available opening. Second, even if there is an opening, you are gambling that your carefully constructed resume will match. The odds are clearly against you when compared with the circumstances where you know an opening exists and can somewhat structure your background to fit the opening.

A well-constructed resume improves your odds, and if you have the time, this direct approach can produce interviews. If you do get the interview, the resume will facilitate and aid the interview process. If you fail to land an interview, many employers will keep your resume on file in the event an opening develops later. This is where perseverance counts.

## Answering Employment Ads.
Job leads can come to your attention in many ways. Some of the most common are want ads in newspapers, websites, trade journals, association newsletters, and job bulletins from college and alumni career service offices. Usually, you know that a job exists.

An employer wants and expects to receive resumes with cover letters in reply to the ad. By design most ads draw many resumes. No employer wants to screen through irrelevant data.

Will your resume match a brief set of job specifications? Keeping your resume concise aids this matching process and increases your odds of being screened in.

Although a separate resume does not have to be prepared for answering each job ad, the better you can show that your credentials match the specifications for a particular job, the better your chances are of obtaining an interview.

A broadly designed resume does reduce your work because it can be used in applying for many types of jobs. But it also has the distinct disadvantage of putting your resume into a class with all of the other also-rans because of its

*Broadly focused resumes, in contrast to job-focused resumes, are less likely to get through the initial 60-second glance.*

lack of a clear-cut match with any one job. What can you do to move the reader's eye to the exact credentials that match the screening variables?

Your goal is to make the employer's selection decision easy. If your credentials are obvious, the employer will quickly ascertain your fitness for the position. Thus, you are much more likely to be called for an interview.

### Agency Calling Card.

If your job search process involves using an employment agency, executive search firm, or college career service office, you will be asked to submit a resume.

Unless you are a highly sought-after individual, you will have to decide which type of resume to submit. It must be a broad-based resume since you have no idea of the eventual circulation; however, broad-based resumes are not generally effective. You have to make a judgment call.

The agency needs guidance on what type of job you want. They will not refer your resume to the world. It will be selectively circulated. Do not let an agency make career decisions for you. You should tell them where you want your resume sent.

The more specific you are about the type of job you want, the fewer times your resume will be referred. However, when it is referred, you will stand a better chance of securing an interview than do those applicants whose resumes are vague and general.

Most people develop multiple resumes. One of your resumes should include a broadly focused job objective (or no objective). This is one of your targeted resumes. Other resumes should be more focused on specific jobs. The agency may need the *generic* version for referral purposes, but when you interview, remember to give the potential employers your job-focused version.
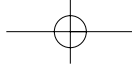
### Direct Mail Piece.

Canvassing a potential job market by sending a cover letter and resume is an approach used by many in a job search. For this approach to be effective, a special mailing list and specifically targeted career objective are required.

The resume serves as your advertising brochure. It explains what you have to offer and how your services can meet the needs of the employer.



I CAN TELL BY YOUR RESUME, WE HAVE SOMETHING IN COMMON, RALPH ... I LIKE PEANUT BUTTER TOO.

### References.

Whether or not you elect to place recommenders (references) on your resume, you will want to maintain a repertoire of former employers, colleagues, teachers, etc., who are willing to say positive things about you. These recommenders are frequently called by potential employers.

What will your recommenders say about you? You can influence what they say by providing them with a very thorough and complete resume. Most will flip to your resume when contacted and use it to provide the potential employer data.
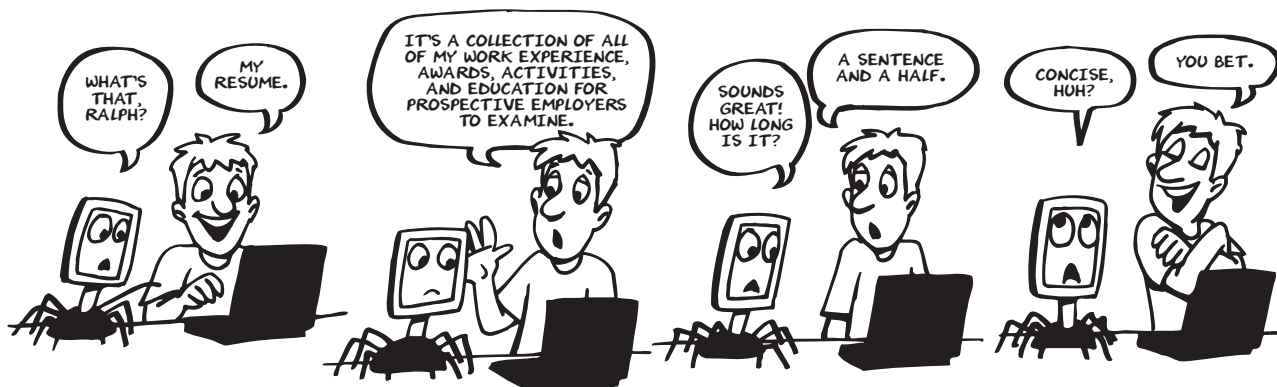
Some recommenders will read your complete resume. This is one situation where a multiple-page resume might be useful.

Although you may feel confident that these people will say good things about you, you do not know exactly what they will say or how they will say it. It is easy for others to get facts about you slightly and unintentionally incorrect. Their information may be inconsistent with what you told the employer.

In order to avoid such difficulties, always keep your closest recommenders supplied with up-to-date versions of your resume. They will feel more comfortable and you will know that the facts are correct. You might want to provide your network partners with a two or three page broadly written resume and your one page targeted resume.
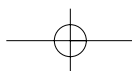
### Contacts.

*Carefully plan how you intend to use your resumes. You need different resumes to use with agencies, references, direct mail, and personal network contacts.*

A good job search strategy demands that you have many people working on your behalf. You need certain people to recommend you for specific jobs. These contacts are your personal sales representatives. These relationships are extremely important to you in the job search process.

A contact may send out your resume to an employer they think might like to interview you, or simply may make a few remarks about you in a letter, telephone call, or personal conversation. However, no matter what method the contact uses, they need an up-to-date resume in order to be aware of your current qualifications and goals.

Your resume is a central part of your specific job search strategy. It must be strategically planned in order to be most effective. It is wise to maintain a longer version of your resume to share with your networking contacts.

### Resume Scan Software.

The jargon that you use must be supported by the content, under education and/or experience. The employer's software used to scan resumes looks for "keywords." These keywords should be reflected in your career objective. The preceding paragraphs covered the importance of including words that relate to your future goals on your resume. Scanning software will identify your resume from the scores of others if you anticipate the words or phrases that your potential employer will likely be seeking. Insert keywords, taken from a job description, that you think might be used by scanning software.

> ### Breaking the Scan Trap
>
> Targeted resumes assist in breaking through the scan test by convincing employers that your employment will make a difference.
>
> Will your employment make a difference? Average talent abounds and you are not average. Effective resume presentations package your credentials in an honest approach designed to convince the employer to invite you for an interview.
>
> The resume is not your whole sales pitch. Its purpose is to get you the interview. The purpose of the *interview* is to get you the offer. Recruiters look for items to screen you out, not in. Too much bait may provide tidbits that can be used to eliminate you, and too little bait may offer a weak lure. You need balance.
>
> The hiring manager has several screening factors in mind in reviewing resumes. When you hit one of those screening factors, you inch the door open a bit further. As your story unfolds, you add to the factors that you suspect the screener is seeking. The first scan is in looking for what you want to do.

# Format

*The purpose of the resume is to introduce you to the employer and help you obtain an interview. It is more of a sales brochure.*

There is no one accepted way or format for preparing a resume. Unlike employer application forms, whether web or paper based, the resume is given in a free format and can highlight your assets while minimizing your limitations. Applications force you to give all data requested, regardless of how it bears on qualifications.

The resume *differs in principle* from application forms. Application forms screen you *out.* Effective, free-form resumes screen you *in.*

Application forms present basic facts about background in an organized scheme so that employers can rapidly screen on key factors and readily compare the qualifications of the various candidates competing for a given job opening. Anticipate the key reviewing factors and build them into your resume words.

**Structure.** The resume is not a letter or a bibliography written in a narrative format. It is closer to an outline for a major speech about you. The purpose of the structure is to highlight the positive points that will screen you in. The idea is to draw the reader's attention to a few basic and extremely important elements in your background.

*The outline structure allows you to attract attention to elements of your background that you believe will entice the employer.*
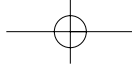
The structuring of these critical elements directs the attention of the reader on them. They positively influence the employer to consider you further.

**Appearance.** A five-second glance at a resume leaves an impression. The content may be ideal, but if the initial impression is poor, the resume may never be read. Organization of several key elements aids the initial impression, but neatness also generates a pleasing appearance. The resume must be printed with a word processor. Misspelled words are totally unacceptable.

Graphically, the resume should be easy to follow and pleasing to the eye. Excessive narrative, smudges, extraneous marks, etc., are unacceptable. A well-constructed resume uses ample white space in a neatly blocked pattern to facilitate reading.

### Traits to Express

- Attitude
- Career direction
- Character
- Confidence
- Enthusiasm
- Involvement
- Leadership
- Maturity
- Motivations
- Organization
- Personality
- Self-expression
- Social skills
- Work desire
- Work habits

Figure 10.2

## Construction Methods.

In an initial 60-second scan, an employer's eye will pick up four to six key points on a resume. With what five points do you want to hit the employer?

After you determine your five most important points, you can lay out your resume in such a way as to force the reader's eye to focus on those five points with the initial glance.

You can move the reader's eye to certain points by use of well-chosen design techniques. White spaces move the eyes and capitalization focuses attention on a given area. Capitalization of a whole word is more vivid than capitalizing only the first letter. Lowercase letters indicate that the fine print should be read for more details.

In addition, underlining and boldfacing are effective ways to consistently emphasize the foremost points in the various elements. Be consistent with underlining and bolding but do not overdo it. A three-inch long underline is followed by a shorter length. A long underline in the education element might be followed by a long underline in the experience element. Within each element, if you use underlining more than once, make the lines progressively shorter.

An indention tends to tell readers that detail may follow. The reverse indicates that the material above is more important, so look at it first. You want to keep readers from overlooking indentions, so use bullets, dashes, asterisks, etc., to keep their eyes moving. These techniques tend to indicate that the detail is also important.

Resumes need some detail to support the main points, but long narrative-style paragraphs tend to clutter resumes. In order to avoid this, never make a paragraph longer than four sentences. If you must go longer, use multiple paragraphs with each paragraph emphasizing a different point.

This approach is particularly effective under *education* if you want to expand on subjects, projects, or extracurricular activities when there is a lack of work experience. If you have been out of school for several years, you might want to downplay education and expand on *work experience* instead.

Incomplete sentences can be used to expand upon detail. If you want to say more but still keep the resume short, you can write out complete sentences and then go back and eliminate all extraneous words such as "and" and "the," some phrases, pronouns, and prepositions, and still retain the key verbs and nouns. In addition, to separate key points, you can run them together with the use of triple dots (ellipses).

## Section Size.

Resumes are composed of a series of sections, such as education, activities, work experience, etc. It is desirable to allot a balanced amount of space to each element, but for many people that is not practical or wise.
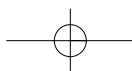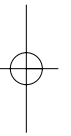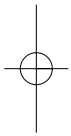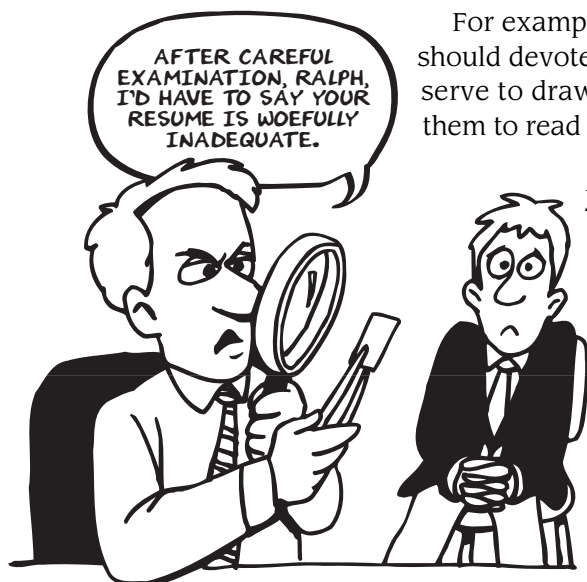
For example, if your strength is your educational background, you should devote more space to that element than to any other. That will serve to draw the reader's eye to that part of your resume and force them to read more of the detail there.

However, if you have extensive work experience and your schooling is several years behind you, you might devote little attention to education. Emphasizing your **skills** is most important. You should devote the most space in describing your competencies.

### Section Order.
There are some accepted practices in the ordering of the resume elements. The identification and career objective are always at the top, and references, if used, are always at the bottom. The body of the resume tells about your education, activities, and work experience.

Education and experience are frequently reversed. The area to which you devote the largest amount of space should be the most important element. Place the more important section first.

### Length.
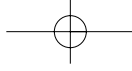The length of your resume should be dictated by three things:

- Extensiveness of background
- Potential use of the resume
- Key points to be emphasized

Ideally, your resume should be just one page if its major use is to serve as a screen to obtain an interview.

No matter how extensive your background, the employer is looking initially for only a few key variables. After securing an interview, however, it might then be advantageous to give the interviewer a multipage resume at the time of the interview.

### Recommender Exception.
If you have been working full-time in your career field, it is appropriate to put together a two-page resume. This should be in *addition* to the one-page synopsis. Your two-page resume is best given to your references and people who know you well who might be instrumental in referring you to potential employers. They need the additional information to use in recommendations.

College students with extensive leadership and activities as well as meaningful work experiences often prepare two-page resumes. Again, this is in *addition* to the one-page resume. This is best shared with personal contacts, such as professors, who you know will take the time to read and share it. You might share the 2-page version with employers after you have had success with the

**Graphic Considerations**

- White or off-white paper
- Concise
- One/two pages
- Quality paper
- 8½ × 11 size
- Balanced sections
- Error-free
- Print or type
- Quality copy
- Ample white space
- Centered text
- Outline format
- Underlined section heads
- Capitalized body points
- Bullet point features
- Neatly blocked

**Figure 10.3**

*AFTER CAREFUL EXAMINATION, RALPH, I'D HAVE TO SAY YOUR RESUME IS WOEFULLY INADEQUATE.*

*Use multiple-page resumes only when you know the reader wants to read it; not scan it.*

initial interview. Three page resumes are nearly worthless. Even your network partners and coaches rarely have time to read them.

A resume is not a life or work history. It is a short, informative summary. Nevertheless, there are many reasons for preparing a two page resume. When a multipage resume is used, the cover letter tends to become the brief summary.

There are some professional field exceptions to these generalities. Performers, academicians, scientists, high-level executives, creative advertisers, writers, etc., often must submit multipage resumes, academic vita, or portfolios. To a great extent, much of this is dictated by the employment processes within those professions.

*Use a one-page resume!*

## Paper.

Resumes should always be copied onto 8½″ × 11″ paper. Legal size paper is not recommended and is seldom used. Smaller paper tends to get lost in piles, and large-size resumes get pitched because they will not fit conveniently in in-boxes or files. Also, fancy folds, odd shapes, and other gimmicks designed to get attention should be avoided.

## Copying.

The most flexible resumes are those produced using word processing equipment. Whenever possible, use a very high-quality printer.

You should reproduce your resume using a high-quality copy machine or printer.

Most experts recommend using a word processor with a laser printer. You can also use desktop publishing software to get the typeset "look" if desired.

When copying your resume, avoid using colored paper. If you want to be a little different, consider only off-white tones, light earth tones, and light gray. The majority of all resumes are reproduced on twenty-pound white bond paper.

## Photographs.

Few resumes have photographs attached. However, if you prefer to use a photograph, place a 2½″ × 3″ size photograph in the upper right-hand corner. Nearly all experts recommend not using a photograph in the United States.

Pictures present problems for a number of reasons. It is against the law to discriminate against job applicants on the basis of race, sex, religion, age (over 40), or national origin. A picture can identify those variables.

By law, an employer cannot require a photograph until after the hiring process is completed. In addition, some states have laws against employers having candidate's photographs in employment files before they are hired.
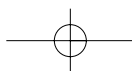
Incidently, in Europe and other parts of the world, the normal convention is to include a photograph on your resume. When in Rome . . .
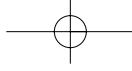
The only legitimate reason for a photograph being placed on a resume is to enhance recall. This can be quite important if you are applying and interviewing for a job that has many qualified applicants.

*A photograph can help you after an interview by aiding the interviewer's recall abilities.*

Your qualifications will be quite similar to other applicants. Personality will play an important part in the decision process. With so many applicants, the employer could have a problem remembering you. Thus, the picture would help to recall you and your conversation.

Inclusion of a photograph on a resume is unusual. Whether to include it or not depends on interviewing circumstances and your personal judgment.

## Writing Services.

There are a number of firms that, for a fee, will write your resume for you. You must supply all of the information, including your goals and your intended use of the resume. Many are affiliated with the large web job boards.

Given this information, they will design a polished, professionally packaged resume. It will look great and emphasize your most important assets if it is prepared by a reputable organization. A "google" web search and yellow pages will help you locate these services.

However, a really good resume must be written by you. Experienced recruiters can easily spot professionally prepared resumes, and often these are the first to be discarded because they are often not a sincere reflection of you.

Remember that your resume is a sales device. You will likely spend several hours working on it. It must present a positive image but not an insincere, glittery impression.

If you have above-average writing ability, you should try to prepare the resume yourself. If you question your abilities, consult an expert. If you go to an expert, make sure to provide an extensive amount of data on every element of your resume. Start with a large amount of data and let the experts downsize it during editing.

## Printing Services.

Copy and printing services regularly provide copies of resumes for job applicants. Most of these services simply set up the resume, let you correct a rough draft copy, and then run the number of copies you order.

Some services also employ experts who will create resumes on quality desktop publishers. The process can range in cost from $30 to more than $80. In units of 50 copies or more, reproduction costs run from $.05 to $.25 per copy. Rarely will you need these services.
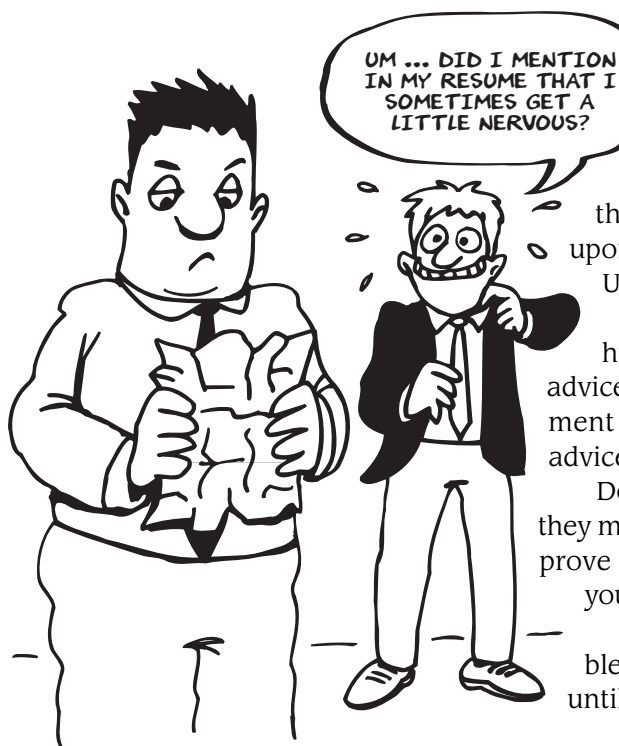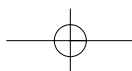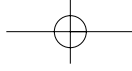
## Advice.

Even if you use resume writing and printing services, you basically must do all of the work of putting the resume together. Most people wind up doing three to five drafts before they get a resume with which they are pleased. During this trial-and-error stage, it is a mistake to rely solely upon your own judgment. Advice is usually free. Seek it. Use the suggestions in your next draft.

Teachers, counselors, and career service prose see hundreds of resumes. These are the people to go to for advice. If you know someone in the human resource department of a medium or large organization, solicit his or her advice.

Do not overlook your friends and colleagues. Although they may not be experts, they can offer suggestions that may prove helpful, particularly in design, presentation, and how you say things.

In the final analysis, the document you finally assemble must be a true reflection of you. Work on your resume until you reach the point where you feel extremely proud

## Resume Sections

- Identification
- Career objective
- Education
- Extracurricular activities
- Work experience
- Professional/civic activities
- Publications/research
- Personal background
- References

**Figure 10.4**

of it. You will probably then find yourself improving it year after year. It rarely is a finished product; it is always a work in progress.

# Types of Resumes

The two most common forms for resume design are "chronological" and "functional." The chronological resume is blocked into sections categorized by source of skills (education, work, activities, etc.). The functional resume is categorized by the skills possessed (managing, writing, research, etc.). The work experience, education, activities, etc., are all discussed under each functional heading rather than vice versa.

The attention-grabbing, targeted resume may be used with either the chronologically designed resume or the functional resume. The job objective focuses attention on the initial match. The details used to strengthen the match between your credentials and job qualifications are presented later in the body of the resume.

**Chronological Design.** This skill-based approach catalogs education, activities, and work experiences in a manner that describes your skills and personal qualities in about the same order as they occurred. These events in your education, activities, and work sections are listed in order of most recent first within the three major headings.

**Functional Design.** This skill-based approach lists and categorizes your skills first and then illustrates the events that shaped the particular skill being

## Basic Resume Formats

**Chronological**—Presents work experiences and educational background in reverse time sequence with a statement about each relevant episode.

**Functional**—Catalogs under major skill-set headings major areas of involvement that draw upon work experiences, education, and personal background. Dates and details may not be presented sometimes, but the skill is usually documented by reference to the individual's background.

**Targeted**—Presents abilities and accomplishments in a highly focused method that targets directly into a specific job, functional field, or industry group. The targeting occurs in the construction of the career objective statement. A targeted resume can be used in conjunction with either the chronological or functional resume formats.

**Figure 10.5**
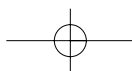
### Functional Resume Advantages

- Emphasizes accomplish-ments
- Stresses marketable skills
- Camouflages broken employment record
- Emphasizes abilities/recognitions
- Downplays multiple job changes
- Minimizes importance of where and when

Figure 10.6

described. You draw upon your education, activities, and work experiences to support your abilities. Your particular skills are used as section headings within the resume body.

Most college graduates tend to use the chronological approach. Some career field changers or reentrants into the labor market prefer the functional approach. It is a technique occasionally used to escape being pigeon-holed from past education and work experiences.

Basically, the same information is placed on each resume, but it is organized differently. In actual practice, most resumes are hybrids of the two varieties. Over 95 percent of resumes are initially categorized by chronological sections rather than skills possessed.

The advantage to the functional approach is that it quickly spotlights marketable skills for the employer to review. This format emphasizes growth and development of the
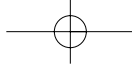
### Sample Functional Resume Headings

Use this style to highlight your leading skills.

| Technical Skills | Functional Skills | Administrative Skills |
|---|---|---|
| Accounting | Distributing | Analyzing |
| Computer | Engineering | Controlling |
|   programming | Financing | Coordinating |
| Designing | Managing | Delegating |
| Engineering | Manufacturing | Directing |
| Foreign languages | Marketing | Leading |
| Legal | Operations | Managing |
| Mathematics | Purchasing | Motivating |
| Public relations | Researching | Organizing |
| Reporting | Selling | Planning |
| Speaking | Supervising | Presenting |
| Teaching | Training | Programming |
| Writing/editing | | |

Most employers want you to identify the education and work experi-ence that contributed to development of these skills.

Figure 10.7

---

**Functional Resume Example**

**Writing Skills**
- Compiled and published reports on the topics of . . .
- Earned awards on the clever design and depth of contrast presented on the following publications . . .
- Wrote over 20 articles for the college newspaper, largely on the topics of . . .
- Edited 50 articles over a period of years and recently compiled them into a new book titled . . .

**Managing Skills**
- Hired and trained 12 research assistants
- Managed a staff of 30 people
- Responsible for a budget of $58,000

**Figure 10.8**

---

skills being marketed. Jobs not extremely relevant to career goals can be played down. Some people use this technique for hiding spotty employment records.

Most employers are not fond of the functional resume style. Hybrids are used to emphasize your unique functional skills rather than unrelated education or irrelevant work histories.

The chronological approach is familiar to all employers, so it is favorably regarded by them. The simple, direct structure even guides employers in the interview process. Strong emphasis is placed on previous employers and the descriptions of the jobs done for them. It is easy to emphasize accomplishments.

The chronological approach is better accepted and serves the needs of more people than the functional approach. Examples of both approaches are illustrated. Use whichever form fits your personal preference.

## Web Resumes

Many employer websites and job board sites allow you to load your resume onto their sites. The commercial job board websites often charge an employer a reasonable fee to search for resumes on their website. It is usually free for you to upload your resume onto such a site.

Many college career service offices also allow you to upload your resume onto their website. Some have developed their own "web resume book" or purchased such a service from a vendor. Employers are moving away from the "resume book" process using hard copy resume books. It is so much easier, and more effective, just to scan a resume database for the "keyword strings" or "selected criteria" to "pre-identify" potential applicants to interview.

The www has changed the way that thousands of employers now select job candidates. Most of the traditional ideas still work but if you don't avail yourself of the latest technology, you could lose opportunities for interviews.
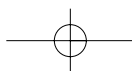
## Computer-Generated Resumes

There are several computer-generated resume software packages available. Most of them offer a self-contained tutorial on how best to develop your resumes. Since there is no standard resume format or accepted norms in the fields, the computer program developers must basically select what they consider to be a more than adequate resume consistent with the constraint that it must fit a multitude of different types of backgrounds.

Essentially, the tutorial lock-step pattern is equivalent to reading a good book on resume preparation. There are several advantages that the computer approaches offer:

- Easy to make changes
- Handle the formatting issues and design for you
- Cover all essential elements
- Graphically lay out in an appealing manner
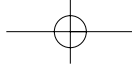- Provide a rigorous pattern for inputting data

Some of the disadvantages include:

- Not as flexible as word processor
- Expensive to purchase
- Requires access to specific computer configurations
- Resume print quality dependent upon printer quality
- Offer fear to the computer illiterate crowd

These programs make the resume preparation a simple task. If you want to be more creative, a word processor can be just as effective. However, you may need the tutorial advice. Most bookstores and software retail stores can help you locate resume software packages. A web search of computer supply websites will also generate software packages available. Your local bookstore staff can also help.

Selection Criteria. Most job descriptions give specific job-related requirements and the HR staff typically does their first screen on these required variables. Listed below are some of the variables that employers often use in this initial screen.

- Degree level
- Major
- Minor
- GPA
- University name
- Technical skills
- Location desired
- Minimum salary desired
- Years of experience
- Language proficiency

- Date available
- Full-/part-time
- Internships
- Professional organizations
- Areas of job interest

These job description variables are entered into the website resume search engine by the employer. It is very easy to scan through resumes with software looking for key variable or word strings. The full resume is reviewed only after it matches all of the job-related criteria. This relieves employers of hours of resume reviews. Only a small subset needs to be printed or reviewed on-line, which hastens the hiring process from "listing to interview selection" significantly.

### Data Fields.
Rather than scan through actual resumes, many websites request that you complete a database. You are given several tables with drop-down choices to select with your mouse. This constructs a database that allows web-based software to much more rapidly scan thousands of resumes in a shorter time period. Within seconds, employers could select "qualified" candidates and download or print resumes.

You want to place your data and resumes on many of these sites. All sites intuitively lead you through the process of entering data into their servers. On most sites the data can be entered in less than 15 minutes.

### HTML Resumes.
Many sites allow you to upload your actual resume to their server so employers can print a copy once your skills and abilities in the database match their needs. This upload/download facilitates the employer's access to you for further resume screens and internal distribution by HR staff to live hiring managers. You can then be contacted via telephone, fax, or e-mail (preferred) for subsequent interviews.
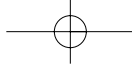
Some websites require information to be in HTML format so your word processed resume might need to be converted to this format. In most cases, you can maintain the same "look" on your resume. It is common to just upload your "word" resume and allow the employer do the necessary technical work.

All major word processors allow you to "save" your resume in HTML format. Once you do that, you often must view your resume and do some minor html coding to ensure that centering, columns, tables, tabs, line spaces, etc., are as you intended. You then can upload your HTML resume to the site.

Many people don't have a good knowledge of HTML so there are other ways to get a properly designed resume uploaded. Some sites present you with templates that are small boxes and tables in which you replace the "sample info" with your own data. They are very easy to use and then automatically submit. The boxes may be the standard resume elements:

- Career objective
- Education
- Activities
- Honors
- Skills
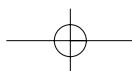
- Internships
- Work experience
- References

Most expect that you already have a word resume. Therefore, you are asked to copy and paste into these categories. Employers can then reconstruct your resume after the "selection" has been made.

Once you "fill in the blanks," you click a submit button that sends your resume forward. You can then, with your password, print out your own resume. Some sites allow multiple resumes for different career objective resumes.

### Writing HTML Resumes.
There are several excellent HTML editors that you can use to prepare your resume without the use of the preformated templates. These give you great functionality so you can use any style or format that fits your needs.

Microsoft FrontPage, Netscape Composer, and others provide excellent HTML editors. They function exactly like the word processor with which you are already familiar. The resume is already saved in HTML and, thus, you maintain your exact "rich text look" after you upload your resume.

### Summary.
Each website operates a little differently but the concepts are all the same. You should load your resume onto as many sites as you have time to review. It's easy. It's free. The employer pays a fee for a subscription, advertising, search, or other novel ways. Take advantage of this opportunity to broadly circulate your resume. This upload process is continuing to get easier to do.
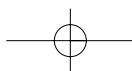
## Image Creation

A resume is words, and many words have multiple meanings. Some words have more positive connotations than others. You must make *every* word on your resume count because wasted words can spoil your chance for success. A resume is not a hastily thrown together document.

*Word selection is critical.*

Your resume must be a reflection of your personality and interests as well as a description of the specific skills you have earned via education and work experience. Words that connote achievement and expertise give meaning and life to your resume. Your resume should not be just a collection of bland nouns and verbs. The resume reflects you.

### Words to Avoid.
Your goal is to avoid as many unnecessary words as possible while including important words that are likely to influence the employer's decision. Words such as "I," "he," and "we" are superfluous and should be eliminated. One way to avoid this pitfall is by starting sentences with verbs.

Words can reflect the positive image you have of yourself and express the confidence you have in your abilities. Resume writing is one activity where it doesn't pay to be humble; patting yourself on the back is part of resume-building. Certain words connote success. Use them generously.

## Hi-Tech Resumes

Nothing is likely to completely replace the traditional one-page paper resume soon, but innovative and creative approaches to the concept are now possible with recent technological advances. Some of these are noted below. These include personal ads, video resumes, computer-generated resumes, database resumes, and web-entered resumes.

***Video/Audio Ad.***  If a 30- to 60-second ad can sell hamburgers, why not you? Some news stations have successfully experimented with this concept for years. The basic idea is for you to appear in front of a camera and offer a brief resume and a statement of your job interests. The typical commercial goes like this:

Hello, my name is **[Name]**. Are you seeking an experienced **[job title]** with a thorough knowledge of **[major category of skills]**? I am seeking a new career opportunity in **[specific job interest areas]**. I have **[statement of top three achievements at work or school]**. I have a **[degree level]** degree in **[major fields]** from **[college]** with a strong academic performance record of **[grades]**. Please call me at **[telephone number]** if you have an opportunity that fits a person with my talents.

These ads have been used on commercial television, cable stations, and as resume introducers. They must be done professionally to be effective, but producing a home version can add some important learning experiences. Some universities and private firms have spliced versions together from individuals in similar job interest areas and marketed them to employers as video resume books.

They do add the visual appearance, communication aspects, and some personality attributes when used in conjunction with the proper resume. Because of the time and equipment needed to view these and the boring nature of the visual presentation, the jury is still out on the effectiveness of this approach.

***Video Resumes.***  Many individuals have experimented with the concept of a 5 to 15-minute videotape (CD/DVD) that essentially covers all points in the resume. The starting point in the production process is a high-quality resume.

These need to be produced professionally with multiple cameras to be effective. A head and shoulders shot for even 2 to 5 minutes does not make a quality product. The most effective video resumes show various clips of you in work, education, and social activities roles with your voice superimposed over the action shots.

A quality product is very expensive due to script development, equipment needed, studio time, editing, and professional advice. Few employers have the time to preview hundreds of these as they do in the 60-second resume scan. Their use is usually limited to certain situations where you have already been screened in as a viable candidate.

The purpose of the video resume is to permit your personal qualities to come through by bringing the paper skill base to life. A quality production shows your ability to communicate, personality attributes, and your leadership potentials. Videos are rarely effective for screening purposes. With all the coaching, some employers question the usefulness of the over-rehearsed presentations.

***Data Base Resumes.***  Many services provide an opportunity for you to place your complete resume into a massive data base. Employers pay a fee to access these files in a search on key screening variables. The most frequently screened variables are job interest, degree, major, grades, prior related experience, location interests, and so on.

The converse of this is your using your personal computer to scan a database to search for potential employers that match your desires.

These services may charge a fee for you to store your data and possibly a fee to update or review it. Employers pay for hook-up time. These fees are fairly modest, if not free.

If you have the credentials that are in great demand, you are more likely to be contacted via such a program. If your background is of a more general nature or your salary demands are high, your chances of being selected decline considerably. Since there are so many private services available, you should thoroughly evaluate each one in relationship to the probability of their employer users accessing your particular resumes.

***Summary.***  High technology is entering the job match business, so the future will undoubtedly improve the results of these efforts. Satellite video interviewing and electronic referral of both data base and video resumes will be a reality someday. The choice to employ and pay for these innovative approaches to an old problem remains a personal decision based on a cost/benefit analysis.

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### Resume Games

Numerous books and articles have been written advocating different approaches to the traditional chronological resume. There are advocates of market letters, extensive cover letters, sales brochures, brief personal portfolios, targeted resumes, functional resumes, and hundreds of other nontraditional forms of employment qualification record displays.

Yet, through decades, the overwhelming favorite of employers remains the basic chronological resume.

Over 90 percent of all jobs filled at the professional, technical, and managerial levels are required to provide a basic background resume. Although no single format or form has emerged, the basic structure has remained unchanged.

A primary reason why employers keep resumes on file has nothing to do with the applicant's qualifications. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission simply suggests that employers retain all unsolicited resumes for several months to help document potential discrimination claims. This recommendation has prompted the majority of large employers to computerize their resume retrieval systems.

When a job opening exists, the first source of qualified candidates is an internal search followed by referrals from current employees. The next screen is a search of the resume database, usually on selected skill-based fields.

Unless you have a carefully thought-through strategy and rationale for using a nontraditional resume, the best advice is to stay with the chronological resume. The test of time is on your side, whereas resume games rarely make it through the prying screen of the professional human resource officer or experienced manager.

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Any words that denote failure or unsatisfactory performance must be avoided. Words such as "fail," "no," "less," "low," "none," etc., should never be part of your resume vocabulary.

If possible, avoid passive verbs and substitute verbs with growth, movement, and driving images. In addition, remember that cliches and flowery phrases never add strength to a resume.

Action Words. Employers want producers. They like movers because the driving person tends to be the most productive. The essence of a good employee is getting a job done efficiently and accurately while being aware of other's feelings and concerns.

Words that show action on your part convey the image of a successful doer. You should use as many of the action words as possible in order to bring life to your resume and cover letter.

Action words can be coupled with nouns or used as descriptors of what you have done or are capable of doing. When tied to your educational achievements, work experience, activities, interests, and plans, the action words provide amazing evidence of your capabilities.
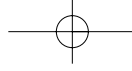
## Action Words

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| accelerate | evaluate | originate | significant |
| adapt | expand | participate | set up |
| administer | expedite | perform | solve |
| analyze | found | plan | strategy |
| approve | generate | pinpoint | structure |
| coordinate | increase | program | streamline |
| conceive | influence | propose | successful |
| conduct | implement | prove | supervise |
| complete | initiate | provide | support |
| control | interpret | recommend | train |
| create | improve | reduce | touch |
| delegate | launch | reinforce | work |
| develop | lead | reorganize | |
| demonstrate | lecture | revamp | |
| direct | maintain | responsible | |
| effect | manage | revise | |
| eliminate | motivate | review | |
| establish | organize | schedule | |

**Figure 10.9**

**Self-descriptive Words.** How would you describe yourself? Try to think of twenty words that would give someone else a good idea of your personality and attitude. You should work as many of these words as possible into your resume if you want the reader to get a good idea of what you offer. Figure 2.12 gives a thorough list of these "Personal Descriptors."

Very few jobs have only one applicant applying. You will be among *several* technically well-qualified applicants. An employer must make a choice. That choice is usually determined by what the employer thinks the applicant *can do* and *will do.*

The impression left by your resume will determine if you are invited for an interview. People who can confidently state their level of skills, interests, and attitudes stand better chances of being selected from a group of other qualified applicants.
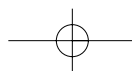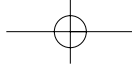
## Self-Descriptive Words

What words would one of your network partners use in describing you to a potential employer?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| active | economical | personable |
| adaptable | efficient | pleasant |
| aggressive | energetic | positive |
| alert | enterprising | practical |
| ambitious | enthusiastic | productive |
| analytical | extroverted | realistic |
| | | |
| attentive | fair | reliable |
| broad-minded | forceful | resourceful |
| conscientious | imaginative | respective |
| consistent | independent | self-reliant |
| constructive | logical | sense of humor |
| creative | loyal | sincere |
| | | |
| dependable | mature | sophisticated |
| determined | methodical | systematic |
| diplomatic | objective | tactful |
| disciplined | optimistic | talented |
| discrete | perceptive | traveler |

Which words define you? What life events would you use in an interview to support your self-description?

Figure 10.10

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## Goal-Directed Behavior

A positive decision about you will occur only if there is ample evidence that you have more than the minimum talents to handle the assignment. Resumes tend to focus too much on "can-do" factors instead of "will-do" factors.

**Can-Do Factors.**  Your skills that result from academic curriculums, extra-curricular activities, and work experiences illustrate that you may be well quali-fied to handle the position. Most employers want to know more about you than *technical* capabilities. Most job-related failures do not relate to weak skills.

**Will-Do Factors.**  Real job success comes from inner motivations, com-mon personal values, related interests, and appropriate personality attributes. An effective presentation of these will-do factors creates a desire by the poten-tial employer to want to talk to you further.

**Results.**  The resume must package together more than a finite set of technical skills. You must also go beyond *saying* that you are a highly moti-vated person. You must *illustrate* in a nonboastful manner that you also pos-sess the personal qualities that are necessary for job success.

Employers review resumes looking for balance in a person's life. Employers want to see individuals who can juggle several balls in the air, make efficient use of time outside the classroom, and progress in full-time and part-time work experiences. What does your resume say?

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It is better to risk sounding cocky. Avoid the humble approach.

Several self-descriptive words are illustrated. Although it is perfectly acceptable to use some of these words in describing yourself, it is preferable to first identify the words that you feel are most descriptive. Then think of educational episodes, work experience, and/or activities that illustrate the descriptors and illustrate these qualities via resume examples.

**Proven Power Words.**  After your interview, the employer always writes a constructive evaluation that cites the results of the interview. Many interviewers prefer to sum up the interview with a few words that describe you. These words tend to be high impact words that connote multiple mean-ings when read by other reviewers.

Some of these "proven power words" are listed below. These words may be used to sell your abilities to others in the organization. The powerful thrust of each word emphatically implies that the interviewer is sold on you. You are a winner.

- Successful
- Seasoned producer
- Proven record
- Results oriented
- Go-getter
- Problem solver
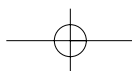
## Design to Highlight Traits

Since the *visual* impact of a resume is often what captures the scanner's attention, design to appeal to scanners, not readers. Rarely are more than two pages read.

**Graphical.**  The resume should be graphically centered and balanced with equal amounts of type and white space. Underlining, capitalization, and bullet points move the reader's eye to the points you wish to emphasize. Some of the resume preparation services are excellent at graphical presentation.

**Accomplishments.**  As you fill in the detail, focus on relevant, concisely stated points that emphasize skills and *accomplishments.* Your superior performance capabilities, personality attributes, and leadership traits need to be interwoven into the description of your background statements. The fine print supports your claims.

**Content Convinces.**  A professionally prepared resume with bullet points initially captures attention. After the first impression, it is resume content that convinces the employer to interview you.

**Key Point Scan.**  The one-minute scan permits only four to seven key points to hit the reviewer's eye. Focusing on more than seven points risks a high probability of a "no interest" response. Once the attention has been captured, you can begin to fill in details.

**Trait's Sell.**  Once the recruiter stops scanning and starts reading, your emphasis needs to focus on personal traits rather than just a recitation of your skills. Traits such as work habits, maturity, confidence, social awareness, and motivation must be presented.

Lengthy and verbose resumes turn off employers. Keep your resume short and crisp. Assist the employer in developing a match in terms of interest, degree, major, and other accomplishments that accentuate positive experiences and leadership characteristics.

- Self-starter
- Goal driven
- Street fighter
- Aggressive
- Team player
- People person
- No-nonsense person

How can you incorporate these proven impactful words into your resume? They can be helpful if they accurately describe you. The inclusion must be done subtly and with finesse or the wrong impression may be reached and your resume discarded.

Like the self-descriptive words, you must use them in *descriptions* of educational experiences, outside activities, job descriptions, and events noted on your resume. As you describe your career history and education situations,

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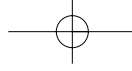
### Words Create Images

Resume reviewers look for words that describe you as a *go-getter, producer, hard worker, responsible,* and *decisive individual.* These action words imply that you are achievement-oriented, assertive, and yet respectful of other's opinions and actions. Certain action words, when incorporated into the description of your education, activities, and work experiences, influence the impression you leave.

**Verbs.**  Verbs such as *analyze, approve, direct, influence, manage, plan, establish, create, supervise,* etc., connote leadership traits. Most career fields need those characteristics.

**Descriptors.**  We rarely desire to describe ourselves as assertive, ambitious, creative, or systematic. But you can use descriptive words to discuss your educational background, personal leadership activities, or work experiences in which you had a major role. By implication, the reader assigns these attributes to you, not just to the experience.

**Adjectives.**  Qualifying adjectives may be used to add impact to your accomplishments. In the body of your resume you will use real situations with names, titles, dates, etc., to describe an experience that illustrates your skill levels.

**Numbers.**  You should use numbers whenever possible to describe the *magnitude* of your achievements. Some examples might include:

- Increased output by 30 percent in three months
- Managed a staff of 20 professionals
- Expanded sales by 10 percent in six months
- Made significant improvements in . . .
- Developed dynamic program on . . .
- Created major contributions including . . .
- Supervised development of . . .

**Adverbs.**  High-impact adverbs can enhance accomplishments. These adverbs might include words such as *effectively, aggressively, tactfully, successfully, fairly, equitably, quickly, energetically,* and *objectively.*
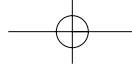
**Impact.**  These high-impact words add *credibility* to your accomplishments. They respond to questions that a reviewer might have in mind and provide meaningful specifics. These influential words and phrases, if carefully, honestly, and objectively selected, should be used within each resume paragraph.

**Results.**  Can your resume be enhanced? Always look for new words that show your true image. Continuous improvement is the lifeblood of successful resumes.

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you use these words. The use of these words will often drive the reader to subconsciously ascribe the descriptor to you indirectly.

### Action Verbs.

As you create each section, you want to use verbs that connote action. You want to be viewed as a person who accomplishes tasks quickly and accurately. How you describe your situations (in education, activ-
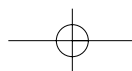
## Twenty Resume Design Tips

How effectively have you used these tips?

- Design for skimmers, not readers.
- Graphically center, balance, and outline text.
- Construct on 8½ × 11 white bond paper.
- Eliminate all errors—perfect.
- Use underlining, capitalization, and bullet points.
- Create "white space" on each page.
- Be positive, avoid negatives.
- Keep the points concise, yet complete.
- Focus on relevant data only.
- Emphasize skills and capabilities.
- Incorporate buzz words about your field.
- Use action words, not passive verbs.
- Use the pronoun "I" sparingly.
- Stress accomplishments.
- Use examples to illustrate personality traits.
- Let actions denote leadership traits.
- Illustrate skills by course specifications.
- Highlight abilities by performance episodes.
- Personalize by showing uniqueness.
- Critique as an advertisement.

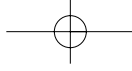Would an after the fact review improve your resume?

**Figure 10.11**

ities, and work experience) leaves an attitude in the reader's mind. Once you have completed your first draft, go back and review how you can insert some of the "Action Words" from Figures 10.9 and 13.2 into your resume.

**Package the Truth Subtly.** A creative targeted resume makes effective use of carefully selected words. These key words add perspective to the mundane detail. They present an honest, sincere, humble view of your background. This image that you project should target upon your values, interests, personal qualities, and skills.

**Values.** What distinguishes you from others with similar skills? *Values* are those principles that we hold dear that do not significantly change over time. Employers tend to generalize about your philosophical leaning on work ethics, motivational traits, social awareness, and professional perspectives.
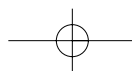
Interests. Career success comes easier if you truly enjoy the activities required to handle assignments expected of you on the job. Hopefully, your interests are similar to successful people in your chosen career field. Targeting these common *interests* encourages the resume reviewer to slow down and take note of your likes and dislikes.

Personal Qualities. Certain career fields require unique attributes that transcend the basic ability to do a given task. Recruiters scan for the best, not just adequate, *personal qualities.* You must focus on descriptions of your education, activities, and work experiences that reveal characteristics such as personality, teamwork, social poise, maturity, responsibility, loyalty, work ethics, and major commitments.

Skills. Resume writers often spend an inordinate amount of space describing job-related skills. Most applicants who get to the interview stage possess the basic set of skills needed to handle the position. Be careful in overstating the obvious in the limited space available. It is your *unique* set of values, interests, and personal qualities that truly make you a very special applicant. You must acknowledge your job-related skills but not dwell on the obvious.

Door-Openers. The best qualified people are not the only people who get the interview. Skills open doors but the person who is eventually hired may not have the highest degree, possess the most directly related college major, or enjoy the highest grades or other top competencies. The resume packages the total individual, not just the skill-based components. Effective resume presentations subtly display a wide range of character attributes. Have you helped open the door to the reviewer by presenting your best attributes?