CBAT Career Services:
Strategic Resume Writing
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Basic Truths:

- ✓ The first viewing of a resume is a "look"…..not a "read." Think 6-15 seconds.
- ✓ **CUSTOMIZE** your document for your **audience**—job/internship/industry.
- ✓ **Build life experiences** so you have something include on your resume.
- ✓ Creating a resume is an exercise in **strategic information management**.
- ✓ **RESULTS** matter.
- ✓ Failure to include enough **white space** will make your document appear scrunched.
- ✓ Show how you have **applied** the following skills: communications, teamwork, adaptability/flexibility, project management, leadership, global awareness

Contact Information:

- ✓ Name is clear, bold, and in a larger font.
- ✓ Choose a font that is industry appropriate; don't use too many! Careful on italicizing.
- ✓ Include your **email address**!!!!!
- ✓ Include your link to your **LinkedIn profile.**
- ✓ Also be sure to include your complete mailing address and <u>**working**</u> telephone number.
- ✓ This is a good time to **"professionalize your life"** online and in voicemail.

KEY Headings:

1. **MARQUIS (or OBJECTIVE)**

   - Create as a **MARQUIS heading** outlining job title sought or a generic moniker for your goal: "**Marketing Professional**." This heading can be centered with descriptive skills centered and outlined below.
   - Can also be entitled "**CAREER INTERESTS**"
   - Create an objective that **provides direction** to the reader.
   - Write an objective that is specific for a certain job OR write one that addresses a type of job or industry.
   - Provides direction to the reader without "pigeonholing" you.
   - **Do not use first person**.
   - Outlines how you will **add value**.

2. **SUMMARY** or **PROFESSIONAL HIGHLIGHTS** or **PROFESSIONAL PROFILE**

   - Optional category
   - Utilized most frequently by "experienced" (3-5 years) professionals.
   - Refer to what makes you **"unique"** as a candidate.
   - Indicate number of years of experience in _____.

- Point to demonstrable results.
- You may outline computer and technical skills here.
- You may subsume your objective in this category.
  - ✓ Another option: Choose the most salient points/center under job title heading.

3. EDUCATION

- Place after objective heading IF you have limited professional experience.
- Include: degree, month/year of graduation, university, city/state, accreditation.
- Include: specialized training or licensure if relevant; heading can read: EDUCATION AND TRAINING OR EDUCATION AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
- Optional: GPA (Major GPA; Cum GPA)
- Optional: Honors can be placed here.
- Optional: Activities or Class Projects can be placed here.
- High School: Only include if there is a strategic reason to do so—the hiring manager graduated from your high school, for example.

4. EXPERIENCE

- Get strategic here by breaking this down into other, **targeted experience categories** *that make sense*.
- For example: FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT EXPERIENCE; OTHER BUSINESS EXPERIENCE or MARKETING AND SALES EXPERIENCE; MANAGEMENT EXPERIENCE.
- List positions in **reverse chronological order** within each experience category.
- Utilize **strong, active verbs** to begin each descriptive statement; use present tense verbs for current positions and past tense verbs for older experiences.
- Avoid phrases like "responsible for"—simply use the verb.
- Pull **language from the job description** and incorporate into your document.
- Group **general responsibilities** together first **followed by the results** oriented bullet statements.
- **Use numbers** to tell the tale—i.e., infuse your statements with **%, $ and actual numbers**. Point to results which demonstrate how you have added value.
- When creating **results oriented bullet points**, address the **task** given, your **actions** regarding project management, and then the **results**, if possible, in each bullet.

  - ✓ **For example**: Created and implemented business process improvement plan for shipping client orders, resulting in $25,000 savings to company revenue stream.
  - ✓ **Another example** incorporating numbers: "Led 10 member team" instead of "Led team"
  - ✓ **Another example**: Increased organization membership by 25% during tenure as Membership Chair.

- Include **recognitions** such as Employee of the Month; document promotions and financial bonuses to recognize accomplishments.
- Add "**real world" projects or volunteer efforts** to your experience section to demonstrate skills that are not otherwise represented on your document.

5. **ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE** (optional)

- Add "real world" projects for class and/or relevant volunteer efforts here if you don't feel comfortable including this in your "experience" section.
- Describe as you would a real job, using the techniques outlined above.

6. **COMPUTER SKILLS or STRENGTHS**

- Detail your **computer knowledge/professional strengths**: If a hiring manager goes to HR and asks for resumes of candidates with specific computer skills or professional strengths, your resume will not come up during a search of the employer's database if you do not list these skills.
- For **computing and technology majors**, a comprehensive, specific list of technical skills is critical. List by category: hardware, software, networking, programming languages, etc.
- For many **business majors**, especially marketing, social media knowledge is important to include, whether in your profile or under a skills section.
- Insert a **2 or 3 cell table** to list strengths that directly relate to the position of interest.

7. **RELATED COURSEWORK**: (optional)

- Coursework is good to include **if you are applying for an internship** so the prospective employer can evaluate your skills and subject knowledge.
- Do not include if you have space issues.

8. **LEADERSHIP**: (optional)

- Create a separate category **IF** you have had strong leadership roles in campus or community organizations.
- Point to quantifiable results.

9. **AWARDS AND AFFILIATIONS**: (or **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT** or **COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT** or simply **HONORS**)

- HONORS can be a separate category if merited and can be moved under "Education" if preferable.
- List dates in reverse chronological order.
- Follow the 5 year rule; if the activity is older than 5 years, evaluate whether to include it.
- Detail as appropriate, pointing to results.
- Insert a table, utilizing dual columns if space becomes an issue.

Space Savers:

- Format address using bullets between data: 245 Chinook Drive ● Johnson City, TN 37604
- Utilize dual columns by inserting a 2 cell table.
- Play with margins and font sizes **BUT** do not go smaller than a 10 point font. All 10 point fonts are not created equal. Be careful that your font is not too small.
- Combine descriptive statements *as appropriate*.
- Describe jobs which are relevant to your objective; list job titles for other jobs.
- Edit, edit, edit. Avoid 1 word wraps to the next line.
- If possible, you can eliminate "the," "a," or other articles if you do not lose understanding.

The WOW Factor:

- Visit www.blueskyresumes.com for 80 sample resumes designed around various careers and industries.

- Don't be intimidated by these resumes. While most are written with the "experienced professional" in mind, many of the techniques can be incorporated into your document to add "oomph," setting your document apart from the rest. Note the following:

- *Lines*. Lines placed above and below your name and headings, filled with color, can draw the reader's eye to your document. Placed vertically on the document set apart headings aligned on the left margin.

- *Color.* Use strategically. Fill lines with color (not too wild); choose strategically based on job and industry. If you select a different font color for headings or items you want to highlight, choose wisely.

- *Novel information placement.* Placing "different" headings and information on the left margin such as education, certifications, skills can be an effective and unique way to share resume content.

- *Presentation of job information.* Structuring information regarding general responsibilities in pseudo paragraph format, following with key accomplishments and results highlighted by bullets is effective and really showcases results supported by numbers.

- *Centered headings*. Use to relay your job objective/goal. Center key skills that you bring as a candidate to the potential employer underneath. If you are having difficulty coming up with core competencies, pull from the titles of classes that you have taken.

- *Tables:* Utilize 2 and 3 cell tables to outline strengths or areas of expertise in your field as they relate to the job in question or the audience of the resume.

- *Text Boxes.* Place text boxes on top of an inserted line, type your heading in the box, and then remove the border of the text box to give the look of a "floating heading."

- *Special projects*. If you work in a project-driven job, you may want to highlight selected projects for the reader; this is especially true in technical, creative, web- based careers but works for others as well.

- *Employer testimonials.* Testimonials regarding your work and results can actually be effective on a resume as well as long as the testimonial really addresses concrete skills and results. Usually centered.

- *Personal testimonial*: Outline your vision for work in your chosen field.

- *Strategic bolding.* Allows you to highlight key results, projects, etc.