

4.1 Purpose and Goal of a Résumé

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Understand that a résumé is a marketing document that sells your candidacy and represents you when you are not there.
2. Get specific ideas of how to quantify your accomplishments and create a résumé that proves your worth to past employers, which then proves your worth to future employers.

A well-written résumé can do seven specific things for you and your job search:



1. It represents you when you are not there.

2. It quantifies your accomplishments.

3. It clearly states your abilities.

4. It shows your command of the written word.

5. It creates talking points for a future interview.

6. It proves your worth to your past employers.

7. It demonstrates what you can do for your future employer.

It Represents You When You Are Not There

Your résumé can be uploaded to global **job boards** like **Monster**, **CareerBuilder**, and others in a few minutes. It can be sent to a company's online database with a push of a button. It can then be shared with dozens of recruiters and hiring managers without you even knowing about it. In fact, it's a lot easier to get your résumé in front of a recruiter than it is to have a physical presence in their office; therefore, make certain it's a well-written, well-positioned document that makes an exceptional first impression.

It Quantifies Your Accomplishments

The best résumés quantify results and accomplishments clearly and easily. Here are some examples:

1. If you reduced errors by 35 percent, if you increased profits by 55 percent, and if 75 percent of your customers are repeat customers, include this information clearly, succinctly, and proudly.
2. If you have been a student teacher with thirty-five students in a classroom and student grades improved by 25 percent, include that as well.
3. If you have worked as an administrative assistant in a dentist's office and you are part

of a marketing team that has increased new patient accounts by 10 percent last quarter, include that!

4. If you worked in the school library and the number of lost books has declined by 50 percent, or if you provide guidance to approximately fifty students per day, that information should be in your résumé.

Quantifying your accomplishments gives your résumé readers the specific information they need to know about your abilities and to be intrigued by what you can do for them.

It Clearly States Your Abilities

Focus on the results of your actions. Being results oriented helps résumé readers understand your abilities. What exactly do you do, or what have you done in the past? Your résumé should answer this question very quickly. For example, if you have been responsible for opening and closing a retail store on a daily basis and for managing the register that took in approximately \$5,000 worth of merchandise a day, state that clearly and concisely. If you have written three to four sports articles for your school paper every month for the past three years, include that as well. The more you quantify your accomplishments, the more your abilities will be understood.

It Shows Your Command of the Written Word

You don't have to be an English major to make sure that your résumé is well-written. If your school has a career services department that offers résumé workshops, be sure to participate in them. Ask an older sibling who is in the workplace to review your résumé before it goes into cyberspace or to a future employer. Other options include asking a teacher, professor, or perhaps someone with whom you worked with or for in the past to review your résumé. Whatever the case, it is your responsibility to have a well-written résumé. You can pay for résumé-writing services, but finding someone who knows the basics of solid résumé writing may be all you need, along with this textbook. Remember that if it has one misspelled word, your résumé could easily be dismissed, along with your candidacy. It's critical that your résumé be accurate and well written.

It Creates Talking Points for Your Future Interviews

Clearly listing your accomplishments and quantifying those accomplishments can create talking points for your future interviews. For example, perhaps your bullet point is the following:

- Responsible for the intake and outtake of approximately 1,000 books daily, ensuring that all library users are logged into the new electronic database, which has decreased the number of lost books by 80 percent in the past year.

Many individuals have to think about the results of their work. Including this detailed information in your résumé actually allows you to easily talk about the value you've brought to previous employers. During an interview, with the preceding example in mind, you can easily talk about how you use technology to improve processes. You can discuss the team environment of the library staff and how you are all working toward decreasing the number of lost books. It shows that you have positively affected the bottom line by helping libraries hold onto books versus losing them, which results in unnecessary fees to library users.

It Proves Your Worth to Your Past Employers

Whenever including bullet points about past work, always tie your efforts to the bottom line. Earlier examples in this chapter included the following accomplishments:

- Reducing errors by 35 percent
- Increasing profits by 55 percent
- Boosting repeat sales to 75 percent

Information relating to a company's bottom line is exactly what employers want to read. Highlighting results like these increases your chances of having your résumé noticed.

It Demonstrates What You Can Do for Your Future Employer

Unlike financial investments, past performance *is* an indicator of future success, so include and quantify your past performance, and future employers will be inclined to believe you can do the same for them. They will believe it, but you have to continue supporting that belief with your exceptional networking and interviewing skills ([Chapter 7 "Step 4: Network Effectively"](#) and [Chapter 8 "Step 4 \(Continued\): Master the Interview"](#)). Remember, however, that your résumé is introductory in nature. You want to get their attention and initiate their interest so your foot can inch ever closer to getting in their door.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- A résumé is a marketing document that represents you when you are not there.
- A résumé quantifies your accomplishments and proves your worth to your future employer by proving your worth to your previous employer.

EXERCISES

1. Quantify two or three accomplishments for each of your past employers (this can include paid and nonpaid work experiences).
2. Create two or three bullets for each of your past work experiences and use them to note quantified accomplishments.
3. Share your bullet points with a peer and ask that person to critique your points while you critique your peer's accomplishments.