

4.4 Work Experience

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Understand that your work experience is perhaps the most important part of your résumé because it bridges the gap between being a college student and becoming a potential employee.
2. Include quantified, results-oriented information in your bullets to help engage your prospective employer.

This section is arguably the most important of your résumé because most recruiters look for past work experience as a predictor of future work experience. The most conventional method of listing your work experience is in opposite chronological order (as with your education section). List your most recent job experience first and include the following information:

- The name of the company
- The city and state and, when outside the United States, the country
- The years of employment (If you’ve had several jobs at one company, include the overall years of experience, and for separate jobs, note specific years of experience.)
- Three to seven bullet points describing your responsibilities and the results of your work, depending on the number of years of experience

It’s important to use bullet points because they clearly and succinctly list your responsibilities and achievements. Recruiters do not enjoy or appreciate reading long paragraphs because they want to quickly skim the information.

Action verbs are helpful in this section of your résumé. You may want to consider the following words.

• Accomplished	• Generated	• Showed
• Analyzed	• Influenced	• Standardized
• Assisted	• Introduced	• Structured
• Calculated	• Investigated	• Supplied
• Circulated	• Joined	• Supported
• Clarified	• Led	• Surveyed
• Collected	• Located	• Taught
• Conducted	• Maintained	• Trained
• Decreased	• Managed	• Updated
• Directed	• Marketed	• Used
• Distributed	• Negotiated	• Utilized
• Documented	• Organized	• Verified
• Edited	• Programmed	• Won
• Eliminated	• Provided	• Worked
• Expanded	• Resolved	• Wrote
• Expedited	• Responded	
• Facilitated	• Reviewed	

Bullets should be results oriented and used to help quantify as many things as possible. Earlier in this chapter, we referenced the following examples:

- Reducing errors by 35 percent
- Increasing profits by 25 percent
- Boosting repeat sales to 75 percent

Here is how these items can be put into bullets:

- Reduced errors by 35 percent by creating an Excel program that immediately highlights inconsistencies when raw data are entered into the system.
- Increased profits by 25 percent by gathering best practices and creating a training program for all new hires.
- Boosted repeat sales by 75 percent by delivering the very best customer service, as evidenced by numerous satisfaction letters and comments to senior management.

Work experience comes in many forms. The majority of your experience will be paid, but it's fine to include unpaid work experience. Perhaps you had an unpaid internship working in the marketing department of a magazine. Absolutely include that in your work experience. Perhaps you volunteered to help a teacher organize their classroom, and perhaps you interacted with students and helped them be prepared for the lesson plan. Include that in your work experience. The bottom line here is that through every experience, either paid or unpaid, you learn something. If you are washing cars, you learn the value of a production line: someone washes, someone rinses, and someone receives the payment. It's fine to list work experiences such as babysitting, where your bullet could read as follows:

- Managed three to four hours of after-school activities for three children ages seven to eleven, ensuring homework was completed accurately and efficiently.

You may work in a grocery store and include the following information in your bullet:

- Assisted dozens of customers daily with all aspects of the store's retail offerings, including answering questions about the locations of items and checking out customers quickly and efficiently at the register.

Sample résumés are included the end of this chapter. Refer to them when drafting your résumé as some have quite a bit of related work experience, some have very little, and others have international exposure. Each sample will give you an idea of how to craft your résumé for your job search.


KEY TAKEAWAYS


- Your work experience section is one of the most important on your résumé because recruiters will review this in light of the opportunities they have available.
- No matter what the type of position, it's important to quantify information and your accomplishments. The clearer your experience, the easier it will be for a recruiter to match you to a position.
- Bullet points are preferred when drafting your responsibilities and accomplishments. Recruiters can easily review bullet points versus reading long, drawn-out paragraphs.

- A results-oriented résumé is preferred. Include how you helped your employer succeed and grow.

EXERCISES

1. Review some of the résumés at the end of this chapter.
2. Record all of your work experiences, starting with your most recent.
3. Use three or four bullet points for each experience.
4. Try to tie as many of your responsibilities as possible to the company's or organization's bottom line.
5. When writing your bullet points, remember to be results oriented.
6. Draft a résumé using what you learned in this section, and pair up with someone in this class. Review and critique their information and have them do the same for you. This should strengthen your résumé overall.

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