

## Resumes guidelines, suggestions, and hints

Prepared by the  
Department of Finance and Business  
Law

### What is a resume?

- The word "résumé" means to summarize or reiterate.
  - Keep this in mind as you develop and review your resume.
- Your resume is your first (and sometimes last) chance to make an impression with a potential recruiter.

### The basic information

- Name
- Contact information
  - Current address
  - Phone
  - Email
- Education
- Work Experience
- Honors
- Skills
- Activities

### Education

- University or universities
- Graduation month/year
  - Anticipated for current degree program
- Degree and major
- Minor (if applicable)
- GPA

### Work experience

- Job title
- Employer
- Employer address
- Dates of employment
- Brief description (if not obvious)

### Honors

- Dean's list (list semesters)
- Honor societies (e.g., Beta Alpha Psi)
- Awards (e.g., member of winning business plan team in COB300)
- Scholarships

### Skills

- Microsoft Office
- Statistical packages (e.g., SAS, SPSS)
- Databases (e.g., CRSP, Compustat)
- Other software (e.g., RATS, Captivate)

### Activities

- Clubs
- Volunteer activities
- Additional training

### Hints

- No mistakes.
- Include relevant dates.
- Appear organized.
- Include only academic and business information.
- Keep it short. One page maximum.
- Be accurate and honest.

### Hints , continued

- If including an objective, keep it interesting and relevant.
- Be relevant.
- Keep it simple.

### Hints, continued

- Only mention specific courses if you followed a curriculum that was different than most.
- Only mention specific projects if these were individual projects and you are ready to provide to the recruiter.

### Structure & Style

- Use reverse chronological or chronological order.
  - The former is preferred, but it is most important to be consistent.

### Format

- Use at least 0.75 to 1 inch margins on all sides.
- Possible formats:
  - Table format with two columns: one of the section and the second for the content.
  - Section format, with section headings and content following heading.

### Resume templates

- Microsoft Office (built-in, as well as downloadable)
- Google Docs

### What to avoid

- "Cute" email addresses, e.g., HotChick21@gmail.com
- Sending resumes electronically in Word. Use Adobe Acrobat.
- Large gaps of unaccounted for time in your chronology.
- Lack of skills and activities.
- Your personal life.

### Humor in resumes

- Poorly worded statements:
  - "Coordinated events that enhanced alcohol and drug abuse dangers amongst students."
  - "I completed classes at Wright Business School. While I was there I was on the Dean Honor Roll. I was Val Victorian of my class."
  - "being bi-lingual in three languages"
  - "Ability to meet deadlines while maintaining composer."
- Applicant explained a three month gap in employment by saying it was because he was getting over the death of his cat.
- Candidate included a letter from his mother.

Sources:  
www.mekong.net; CareerBuilder.com; Fortune.

### What are Finance recruiters looking for?

### What they look for

- One page.
- Relevant work experience:
  - Most anything in finance.
  - Use action words to describe experience (in as few words as possible).
- Well-rounded: activities and skills.

## The interview

- ### Preparing for the interview
- Dress professionally.
  - Do your homework: research the company
    - Locations / offices
    - Product line(s)
    - Major recent news events
  - If you know someone at the firm, have them introduce you to other employees.
  - Come prepared with 3-4 questions.
    - The lack of questions shows a lack of interest.

- ### Preparing for the interview
- Practice, practice, practice

## Other things

- ### What else?
- If you have embarrassing videos on YouTube, Facebook or MySpace, eliminate them as soon as possible.
  - Acquire the appropriate attire. Don't assume business casual is the norm.
  - Remember: Recruiters may check your:
    - Test scores (e.g., SAT, GMAT)
    - Transcript
    - Credit report
    - Criminal record

- ### Comments from recruiters
- John McCune (SNL Financial)
  - Thomas Rea (United Bank)
  - Michael Rubel (Weston Presidio)
  - Bruce Bracco (Freddie Mac)

### The objective

" Always include the Objective, this can be a broad statement, but the more specific for the job they are applying for the better." (TR)

" When I look at resumes I don't pay much attention to the objective, so that could be omitted. Generally they are all the same anyway so there is no real distinction created between the applicant and others." (JM)

### Consistency

" The objective, work experience, coursework, and interests should show some enthusiasm around a common field. This demonstrates that this candidate is committed to specific area and dedicated to learning everything they can to be successful in that area. This is particularly important in the investing world – does this candidate love this business?" (MR)

### GPA

" I like seeing the GPA, but if it isn't stellar then I wouldn't include it. What is stellar? Above a 3.5 or so. When I see something below a 3.5 on a resume I start asking questions. When choosing between using an overall GPA and a major GPA, I would default to using the one that makes me look the best." (JM)

" I think Major GPA is a must. Only put cumulative GPA if it is over 3.0." (MR)

**Presentation**

" Spelling/grammatical mistakes and poor writing skills in general almost always result in the immediate elimination of the candidate." (BB)

**Other resume issues**

" Most students do not have much in the way of relevant work experience, so highlight projects and course work that indicate their ability to perform on the job."  
 "... make sure that the reference knows that they could be contacted. I have had times where the reference had no idea they were listed. This does not normally result in a ringing endorsement!" (BB)

**The interview**

" The lack of questions, for me, shows a lack of real interest." (JM)  
 " You need to stay calm and composed." (JM)  
 " Don't ramble, be concise and to the point." (JM)  
 " Sit up straight, speak proper, smile."

**Comments from recruiters**

" Research the company. Understand the company's current situation – what factors are impacting the company, its customers/suppliers/regulators, etc." (BB)  
 " Interviewing is a skill, so practice." (BB)

**Comments from recruiters**

" For investing interviews (hedge funds, private equity, mutual funds, etc.) you should know what is going on in the financial markets and have an opinion as to which way the market is headed. Have a few data points that support your viewpoint." (MR)  
 " For investing interviews, you should have a few stocks that you like and are ready to talk about. Nothing too detailed, but in 30 seconds you should be able to succinctly articulate your thesis as to why you like this particular stock." (MR)

**Comments from recruiters**

" The resume will get you in the door, but the interview gets you the job." (JM)

**What else?**

**Resume services of Career & Academic Planning**

- Read the online help.
- Attend a resume clinic.
- Attend the resume "round-up".

**See also ...**

- "Demystifying the Job Search: Advice for landing the job you want," by John Stein, CFA, Lehman Brothers, on the JMU College of Business web site.