

PLEN

The Public Leadership Education Network | Preparing Women to Lead

How to Build a Stronger Resume

A one-page resume is appropriate for students and recent college graduates; you have yet to accumulate an extensive work history. You can list your education first as a student. Get rid of high school accomplishments, if they are relevant and remarkable you can discuss them in your cover letter.

Make your resume format work for you. Avoid resume templates, which give your resume a “cookie cutter” look. Templates restrict the way in which you can present your experience and take creativity away from you. Not enough white space makes a resume difficult to read and gives a cluttered look. Too much white space can make your resume appear weak. Use an easy-to-read format that integrates white space to give the reader’s eyes a break.

Your campus involvement is valuable professional experience. Describe the details and achievements that you have completed in your campus jobs and/or leadership positions in clubs, sororities, honor societies, or sport teams. These experiences have given you valuable and marketable skills that should be included on your resume.

Think carefully about the section titles in your resume. Having too many, or too few, sections in your resume can be confusing to employers. Group your internship, campus leadership, and other work experience all together under a broad heading (i.e. “Professional Experience” “Work Experience” etc.) and include two to three other sections, such as “Education” “Community Involvement & Membership” or “Skills.”

Avoid unnecessary information. The statement “References Furnished Upon Request” can be omitted, as this is obvious to prospective employers. Don’t include copies of transcripts, letters of recommendation, writing samples, or published works unless requested. If you are asked for an interview, these additional materials can be introduced at that time.

Be smart about your past job duties. Don’t list duties that you don’t wish to perform again. Avoid long descriptions of job duties. One suggestion is to briefly highlight the range of your responsibility and then use bullets to list your most outstanding accomplishments, quantifying results when appropriate.

Do not lie! Don’t fudge anything on your resume, ever. If prospective employer conducts a background check and discovers incorrect information, it will end your candidacy.

Tailor your resume and cover letter to your audience. For certain situations, you will want to highlight different aspects of your experience and career. By customizing your resume for the position, you make yourself a stronger applicant.

Proofread, proofread, proofread! Your resume is your representation of you, make it perfect. A minor typo in your resume can land it in the trash.

Use action verbs. Action verbs and keywords help your resume look professional as well as convey the skills you have developed to a prospective employer.

Be consistent! Your formatting and language must be consistent throughout your resume. Watch your use of boldface, italics, capital letters and the like to ensure that the correct information is highlighted. Be consistent in your descriptions: use past tense for past positions and present tense for current positions.

Update your resume. Periodically revisit your resume to add duties and new achievements as your range of responsibility expands.

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EDUCATION

American University, Washington, DC, Bachelor of Arts in Economics

May 2013

GPA: 3.5

Honors: Omicron Delta Epsilon- American University's Economics Honor Society

Study Abroad: St. Petersburg State University, St. Petersburg, Russia (August 2009 - December 2009)

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Wider Opportunities for Women, Washington, DC

Jan 2010 - Present

DC Women's Agenda Program Assistant

- Advise membership of emerging policy issues affecting women and girls in DC
- Develop written materials and assist in the drafting of grant reports and proposals
- Convene and facilitate monthly seven-member Steering Committee meetings
- Advocate before the DC Council and the DC Administration
- Plan bi-monthly seminars on issues that impact women and girls, including speakers from the White House and other senior level policy experts

Patient Access Network Foundation, Washington, DC

Jul 2009 - Aug 2009

Marketing and Development Intern

- Processed annual survey data using MS Excel for use in two annual reports
- Compiled keywords for the PAN website to better direct web traffic and gain increased visibility for the organization
- Developed marketing plans for key disease funds to reach more patients, resulting in 30 percent increase of patients served
- Researched and reported on partner organizations and prospective donors, including attending coalition meetings

American University Community Service Center, Washington, DC

May 2008 - Sep 2008

Freshman Service Experience Coordinator

- Coordinated a community service event for 600 freshman and 80 upper classmen leaders for 3 days at over 50 sites for a total of over 11,000 hours of service
- Represented American University to the nonprofit community and created numerous partnerships that will continue American University's tradition of service

Government Accountability Project, Washington, DC

Jan 2008 - May 2008

Research Intern

- Researched funding opportunities, maintained a donor database, assisted in direct mail campaigns, prepared for board meetings, edited grant proposals, archived development files, and documented whistleblower cases

LEADERSHIP ROLES AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

American University United Methodist Student Association

Jan 2009 - Aug 2009

President

- Organized and facilitated weekly meetings with membership of over 50 students
- Oversaw five student committees, including recruitment of officers and elections
- Managed budget of \$20,000 for association's programs and operations

SKILLS

Computer: HTML, Social Media Marketing (Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Tumblr)

Language: Russian Fluency