



RÉSUMÉ AND COVER  
LETTER GUIDELINES



# RÉSUMÉ AND COVER LETTER GUIDELINES

## RÉSUMÉ GUIDELINES

### PRESENTATION CHECKLIST

- ✓ Do not use a Microsoft Word résumé template. None of them scan well.
- ✓ Use a laser printer.
- ✓ It is safe to use a conservative font, such as Arial or Times New Roman.
- ✓ Font size should be 10-12 points.
- ✓ Use 8.5" x 11" paper, printed on one side only.
- ✓ Use high quality résumé paper.

### FORMAT

- ✓ Stick to one page; use two pages if you have an advanced degree or extensive experience (10+ years).
- ✓ Make the page easy to scan and graphically pleasing: leave sufficient white space.
- ✓ Select a format that suits your qualifications. Do not automatically follow someone else's, which may not suit what you have to say.
- ✓ Avoid underlining; you may use bullets to emphasize your credentials.
- ✓ Use boldface sparingly for headings and employer information

### CONTENT

- ✓ Put your name, address, and phone number at the top of the page. If you have a second page, repeat your name at the top.
- ✓ Choose topic headings that invite your readers' interest, e.g., Experience, Leadership, Skills, Activities, and Honors rather than "employment" or "other."
- ✓ Include marketable and/or relevant data only; for example, include classes that have been most important in your education and are most relevant to the type of work you seek; do not provide an extensive list of courses.
- ✓ Highlight skills, accomplishments, capabilities, and work experience. Give evidence of your personal impact: show not only that you completed tasks but that you contributed to organizational goals.
- ✓ Cite numbers to convey size and/or scale of project, budget, and staff supervised.
- ✓ Give examples that demonstrate desirable personality traits such as leadership, interpersonal facility, teamwork, and initiative.
- ✓ Minimize personal information and omit unrelated memberships, age, marital and health status, and information that is repetitive, implicit (e.g., high school graduation for a college graduate), or out-of-date. If you are a US citizen or hold a permanent resident visa, include this if readers might have reason to think otherwise.
- ✓ Generally, it is a good idea to exclude data relevant to salary expectations, religious or political affiliations, and geographic descriptions.
- ✓ References are usually omitted. Employers assume that "references are available upon request," so leave this phrase off.

## STYLE

- ✓ Proofread to eliminate all spelling, punctuation, and grammatical errors.
- ✓ Use action verbs and strong adjectives (See “Action Verbs”).
- ✓ Write in the present tense for current positions or projects and in the past tense for previous positions and completed projects.
- ✓ Avoid repeating words or phrases.
- ✓ Leave out unnecessary words, sentences, and phrases such as “Duties included / Hired to / Project involved.”
- ✓ Avoid stilted or confusing language. Ask yourself, “Would I talk like that?”
- ✓ Do not use the first person, I, or any pronouns.
- ✓ Be consistent and use the same grammatical style throughout.
- ✓ Avoid self-flattering terms such as “highly skilled, outstanding, or excellent.” Describe your accomplishments effectively and let readers decide for themselves that you are well-qualified.
- ✓ Be honest and accurate, but not overly modest.
- ✓ Convey through the style and content of your résumé an understanding of your audience’s needs, priorities, hiring criteria, and vocabulary.

## FINAL EDIT

- ✓ Ask a counselor, friend, or someone unfamiliar with your background to review your résumé for clarity and effectiveness.
- ✓ Tailor your résumé to the specific qualifications of the job for which you are applying and/or to the specific employer.
- ✓ Include all-important information, such as dates of graduation, major, GPA, etc.
- ✓ Proofread one more time to ensure correct spelling and punctuation.

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## THE TOP 10 PITFALLS IN RÉSUMÉ WRITING

1. **Too long.** Restrict your résumé to one page. Typographical, grammatical, or spelling errors. Have at least two people proofread your résumé.
2. **Hard to read.** Keep it simple with clean lines and white space.
3. **Too verbose.** Say as much as possible with as few words as possible; avoid use of jargon.
4. **Not enough information.** Give dates describing related work experience; be specific about skills, accomplishments, activities, interests, and memberships.
5. **Irrelevant information.** Customize each résumé to each position you seek (when possible). Of course, include education and work experience, but emphasize relevant experience, skills, accomplishments and activities. Do not include marital status, age, sex, children, height, weight, health, church membership, etc.
6. **Obviously generic.** Tweak each résumé according to the job description. The employer needs to feel that you are interested in that particular position with his or her company.
7. **Too fancy.** Of course, use good quality bond paper, but avoid exotic types, colored paper, photographs, binders, and graphics. Electronic résumés should include appropriate industry keywords and use a font size between 10-12 points. Use italics and boldface sparingly.
8. **Too static.** Make your résumé as dynamic as possible. Begin every statement with an action verb. Use active verbs to describe what you have accomplished in past jobs. Take advantage of your rich vocabulary and avoid repeating words, especially the first word in a section.
9. **Too modest.** The résumé showcases your qualifications in competition with the other applicants.
10. **Put your best foot forward without misrepresentation, falsification, or arrogance.**

## ONLINE RÉSUMÉS

Though scanning technology and practices vary and are constantly changing, some companies still scan résumés and/or use keywords to identify candidates from their database. You want to fill your résumé with as many of these words as possible. Companies that pick up many résumés at career fairs may use scanning technology, though you should always check with the employer requirements regarding format. The essential keywords are specified by each employer for each position. You can only make reasonable assumptions about what a specific employer will ask for. Keep a log of keywords that apply to your occupation and industry.

## WRITING ABOUT YOUR SKILLS — PROBLEM ACTION RESULTS (PAR) STATEMENTS

PAR statements in your résumé make it easy for employers to recognize your achievements. They provide a writing formula that stresses your skills and achievements. This is a way of writing out your skills on a résumé to maximize their impact. Present the skill as a concrete action that has been done. Do not use the words “took part in,” or “gained experience in,” or “assisted in.”

Quantify the results by stating the amount of dollars saved, the number of clients served, the percentage increase in productivity or improvement in efficiency.

Using the action verbs listed on the following page, describe your experience in terms of demonstrated skills and accomplishments in the following format:

Describe the project, context, task, job:

- What activity did you do?
- What were the results, outcomes, benefits?
- Quantify, if possible.

# RÉSUMÉ AND COVER LETTER GUIDELINES

## ACTION VERBS

### Management/ Leadership Skills

Administered  
Analyzed  
Appointed  
Approved  
Assigned  
Attained  
Authorized  
Chaired  
Considered  
Consolidated  
Contracted  
Controlled  
Converted  
Coordinated  
Decided  
Delegated  
Developed  
Directed  
Eliminated  
Emphasized  
Enforced  
Enhanced  
Established  
Executed  
Generated  
Handled  
Headed  
Hired  
Hoisted  
Improved  
Incorporated  
Increased  
Initiated  
Inspected  
Instituted  
Led  
Managed  
Merged  
Motivated  
Organized  
Originated  
Overhauled  
Oversaw  
Planned  
Presided  
Prioritized  
Produced  
Recommended  
Reorganized  
Replaced  
Restored  
Reviewed  
Scheduled  
Secured  
Selected  
Streamlined  
Strengthened  
Supervised  
Terminated

### Communication/ People Skills

Addressed  
Advertised  
Arbitrated  
Arranged  
Authored  
Clarified  
Collaborated  
Communicated  
Composed  
Condensed  
Conferred  
Consulted  
Contacted  
Conveyed  
Convinced  
Corresponded  
Debated  
Defined  
Described  
Developed  
Directed  
Discussed  
Drafted  
Edited  
Elicited  
Enlisted  
Explained  
Expressed  
Furnished  
Incorporated  
Influenced  
Interacted  
Interpreted  
Interviewed  
Involved  
Joined  
Judged  
Lectured  
Listened  
Marketed  
Mediated  
Moderated  
Negotiated  
Observed  
Outlined  
Participated  
Persuaded  
Presented  
Promoted  
Proposed  
Recruited  
Referred  
Reinforced  
Solicited  
Suggested  
Translated

### Research Skills

Analyzed  
Clarified  
Collected  
Compared  
Conducted  
Critiqued  
Detected  
Determined  
Diagnosed  
Evaluated  
Examined  
Experimented  
Explored  
Extracted  
Formulated  
Gathered  
Identified  
Inspected  
Interpreted  
Invented  
Investigated  
Located  
Measured  
Organized  
Researched  
Reviewed  
Searched  
Solved  
Summarized  
Surveyed  
Systematized  
Tested

### Technical Skills

Adapted  
Applied  
Assembled  
Built  
Calculated  
Computed  
Conserved  
Constructed  
Converted  
Debugged  
Designed  
Developed  
Engineered  
Fabricated  
Fortified  
Installed  
Maintained  
Operated  
Overhauled  
Printed  
Programmed  
Rectified  
Regulated  
Remodeled  
Repaired  
Replaced  
Restored  
Solved  
Specialized  
Standardized  
Studied  
Upgraded  
Utilized

### Accomplishments

Achieved  
Completed  
Expanded  
Exceeded  
Improved  
Pioneered  
Reduced  
Resolved  
Restored  
Spearheaded  
Succeeded  
Surpassed  
Transformed  
Won

## SAMPLE RÉSUMÉS

**JANE DOE**  
123 Main Street APT.7 / Miami, FL 33199  
[Doe.j@gmail.com](mailto:Doe.j@gmail.com) / (305) 123-4567

### EDUCATION

**Florida International University, Miami, FL**  
Bachelor of Business Administration **May 2011**  
Dual Concentration: Marketing and Entrepreneurship  
GPA 3.6, Dean's List, Marketing Club

### WORK EXPERIENCE

**Florida International University Department of Career Services, Miami, FL**  
*Marketing Assistant* **Jan. 2010 – Present**

- Design marketing materials such as flyers, event posters, emails and online newsletters using MS Publisher
- Produce electronic multimedia displays utilizing MS PowerPoint to market events across campus
- Assist in event coordination including working with printing vendors

**Samsonite, Davie, FL**  
*Retail Marketing Assistant* **Jan. - June 2009**

- Coordinated Customer Relations Management Program initiative
- Contributed on the production of the holiday catalog, including photo-shoots, content and layout
- Received and responded to donation requests
- Conducted research for possible cross promotions and partner marketing
- Researched competitor best-practices prior to the introduction of new product lines
- Designed a store level Product Knowledge Guide and several product description sheets
- Acted as liaison between store managers and corporate office for individual marketing requests
- Created and administered surveys to over 180 stores to solve store related issues
- Monitored development of inventory management and forecasting program

**Stacy's Pita Chip Company, Fort Lauderdale, FL**  
*Gourmet Account Manager* **Jan. – Aug. 2008**

- Managed 50+ gourmet retail accounts including: corporate, restaurant, and specialty store
- Represented and promoted the company and its product lines at the Fancy Food Trade Show
- Assisted customer service department with fulfilling donation requests
- Utilized Excel and QuickBooks to create reports to track budget and performance goals for the VP of Sales
- Documented and resolved buyer and consumer issues and concerns
- Entered sales orders, created invoices, and received payments in QuickBooks

**Miami Lakes Beauty Salon and Supplies Miami Lakes, FL**  
*Retail Associate* **2003-2005-; June - Aug. 2007**

- Collaborated with promotions representative to revamp entire L'Oréal stock and display
- Created attractive product displays to increase product awareness
- Handled the needs of a 10 person salon staff while also assisting retail customers
- Trained new employees, managed merchandise orders and handled opening/closing of store

### OTHER EXPERIENCES

- Teachers Apprentice Program, teaching sixth grade students American Sign Language Spring 2008

# RÉSUMÉ AND COVER LETTER GUIDELINES

## SAMPLE RÉSUMÉS

### John Jose

11200 SW 8 St., Miami, FL 33174 | [john.jose@fiu.edu](mailto:john.jose@fiu.edu) | 789-111-9999

EDUCATION	
Florida International University (FIU) Bachelor of Business Administration Double Major: <b>International Business &amp; Marketing</b> GPA: 3.7/ 4.00 Dean's List	Miami, FL December 2013
PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE	
<b>M Lilly and Company, LLC</b> <i>Pharmaceutical Sales Representative Intern</i>	Miami, FL May 2013 - July 2013
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recognized as the Most Valuable Player (MVP) for the 2013 Eli Lilly Internship Class</li> <li>Reestablished and managed over 40 accounts in three territories throughout Miami Dade County over a ten week period</li> <li>Analyzed and identifying customers issues and trends, providing tailored solutions in order to increase market share</li> <li>Prepared for daily sales calls and sold Diabetes products to medical professionals and office staff maximizing opportunity</li> </ul>	
<b>United Technologies Corporation – Aerospace Systems</b> <i>Intern</i>	Miramar, FL October 2012 - May 2013
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prepared the 2012 - 2013 salary trend analysis for over 250 employees forecasting increase in wages</li> <li>Audited over 250 performance feedback evaluations providing feedback to upper management</li> <li>Updated various company policy's dealing with overtime, overtime distribution, attendance policy, and FMLA</li> </ul>	
<b>United Technologies Corporation - Sikorsky Aircraft Corporation</b> <i>INROADS Intern</i>	Stratford, CT May 2012 - August 2012
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Validated accuracy of data in the Contract Data Requirements List (CDRL), Project Management Console (PMC) and Primavera database and consolidate the information to understand the overall progress of CMHP work completions</li> <li>Presented current status and path to completion to program management on the consolidation of data from various databases</li> <li>Developed working relationship by communicating with interns and program staff to ensure timely reporting and accuracy of data</li> </ul>	
<b>Yo Trust Bank Community Bank</b> <i>Financial Service Associate</i>	Coral Gables, FL July 2011 – May 2012
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assisted customers with opening new accounts, processing CD's, bonds and IRA's while increasing the banks' deposits by 5%</li> <li>Developed existing relationships through profiling and uncovering additional needs, while maintaining accounts</li> <li>Evaluated clients financial needs and recommended products, effectively increasing individual monthly sales goals by 20%</li> </ul>	
<b>Human Resources Intern</b>	April 2011 - July 2011
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recruited and contacted all applicants for interviews and conducted phone screens for the College Applicant Program</li> <li>Prepared and gathered information for all new hires, transfers, and compiled termination paperwork</li> </ul>	
VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE	
<i>Over 500 hours in Volunteer Experience</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Relay for Life Team Captain, raising over \$1000.00 for relay for life</li> <li>Special Olympics Bowling/Basketball/Golf</li> </ul>	2007 - 2012 2009 - 2011
LEADERSHIP/ACTIVITIES	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Future Business Leaders of America – Phi Beta Lambda</li> <li>Student Government Association (S.G.A.)</li> <li>Florida Junior Community College S.G.A.</li> <li>FIU Sales Team</li> <li>Residential Life Assistant</li> <li>Proctor and Gamble/Unilever CDB Conference</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>President (2009 - 2010) <i>Palm Beach State</i></li> <li>Various positions (2009 - Present) <i>Various locations</i></li> <li>District One Coordinator (2010 - 2011) <i>Five Institutions</i></li> <li>Board Member (2012 - 2013) <i>FIU</i></li> <li>Residential Life Assistant (2012 - 2013) <i>FIU</i></li> <li>Selected Participant (2012 - 2013)</li> </ul>
AWARDS/HONORS	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>First Place Client Services</li> <li>NASCAR HACU/ FIU College of Business</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Future Business Leaders of America – Phi Beta Lambda 2012</li> <li>Scholarship Recipient 2009/2012</li> </ul>
SKILLS	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Computer Skills: Microsoft Office Software (Word/Excel/Access/PowerPoint), Primavera</li> <li>Languages: Fluent in English and Spanish</li> </ul>	

## SAMPLE RÉSUMÉS

**Julia D. Doe**  
11200 SW 8 Street  
Miami, FL 33199  
juliaddoc@gmail.com  
(954) 123-4567

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### EDUCATION:

**Florida International University**  
Bachelor of Business Administration in Marketing  
GPA: 3.3

*Miami, FL*  
*May 2015*

### RELEVANT COURSES:

Fundamental Concepts of Accounting  
Financial Accounting  
Managerial Accounting

Management Information Systems  
Management and Organization  
Marketing Management

### LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE:

#### **BIZ Organization - President-Elect**

*August 2014 – Present*

- Brought innovative ideas; such as new recruitment, fundraising and communication strategies. Included some of the following: excel workshops, toast masters, new social media outlets, and stock market competitions.
- Planned and hosted career fairs, mock interviews, and weekly presentations from various firms with the help of the Executive Board.
- Created a new committee focused in establishing relations and finding job/internship with new firms.
- Produced an orientation video that increased membership and retention in BIZ.

### WORK EXPERIENCE:

#### **Sports Authority**

*Miami, FL*

*Sales Associate*

*May 2012 – December 2013*

- Assisted customers during peak times by effectively providing products with quality customer service.
- Ensured satisfaction of customers, managers, and corporate representatives by surpassing daily objectives.
- Advised and sold products to customers by understanding their needs through appropriate questions.

### COMMUNITY SERVICE:

- Relay for Life run and walk for cancer

*March 2012-March 2013*

### HONORS AND AWARDS:

- National Association of Black Accountants certificate of appreciation for outstanding service and dedication
- Dean's List Spring 2014

### COMPUTER SKILLS:

- Proficient in Microsoft Office: Excel, Publisher, PowerPoint, and Word

### LANGUAGES

- Spanish, Creole, and French

# RÉSUMÉ AND COVER LETTER GUIDELINES

## WRITING A COVER LETTER

### WHAT IS A COVER LETTER?

The purpose of a cover letter is to convince an employer that your skills and background make you a candidate worth interviewing. While a résumé summarizes your experience, a cover letter persuasively relates that experience to a particular job.

A good cover letter will make you a more attractive candidate by demonstrating:

- Knowledge about the job, the company, the industry
- Effort in your job search and enthusiasm for the job
- Professionalism and detail orientation
- Writing skills
- Organized thinking
- Understanding about yourself

Many employers pay great attention to cover letters; increase your chances by sending a well-written cover letter with every application.

### ANATOMY OF A COVER LETTER

A cover letter generally consists of three or four paragraphs; very experienced candidates applying for senior positions may write more.

#### PREPARE

- Review the job description in detail
- List each type of experience and skill the employer is seeking
- Outline how your qualifications answer each of the employers needs
- Choose the best two or three qualifications to describe in your letter
- Research the employer to decide what about the organization or its products appeals to you
- Outline how your interests, values and goals match those of the employer

#### SALUTATION

- Address your letter to a specific person whenever possible
- Be sure of the correct spelling and appropriate title (Dr., Miss, Mrs., Ms., etc.)
- Acceptable alternatives include “Dear Hiring Manager” or “Dear Search Committee” or “Dear Sir or Madam.”

#### FIRST PARAGRAPH

- Explain clearly and succinctly why you are writing
- State the full name of the position and how you learned about it, including the name of the person, publication or website, and the date of the listing

### **SECOND/THIRD PARAGRAPH**

- Write these paragraphs using the outline you prepared, tailoring your letter to the job
- Explain how your qualifications match the job description by highlighting relevant experience and briefly describing accomplishments that demonstrate your capabilities
- Explain why this job and this organization appeal to you and fit into your career goals
- Demonstrate that you have researched the organization by referring to specific products, services, philosophy or mission in your explanation of why you are a good match

### **LAST PARAGRAPH**

- Stress your enthusiasm for the position and your interest in meeting for an interview
- State how and when you can be best contacted
- Thank the individual and end with an appropriate ending

Ensure your cover letter has no grammatical errors or mistakes. Spell checkers do not catch every type of error, so proofread your letter very carefully after spell check.

# RÉSUMÉ AND COVER LETTER GUIDELINES

## SAMPLE COVER LETTER

Your Name  
Address  
Email  
Phone Number

Date  
Name of Hiring Manager  
Title  
Company  
Address 1  
Address 2

**Re:** \_\_\_\_\_

Dear Mr. or Ms. \_\_\_\_ / Sir or Madam / Hiring Manager:

This letter is in response to the POSITION NAME, POSTED ON \_\_\_\_\_. I am extremely interested in this position and am confident that my academic and professional background would be a great fit. That said, enclosed please find my résumé detailing my nine (9) years of experience analyzing, developing, and implementing exceptional multi-media sales strategies. My work history expresses innovation and a proven ability to generate new and ongoing advertising business. As a Sales Planner for the ABC Company, I analyzed media schedules and directed all sales planning for five (5) account executives totaling \$100 million in annual revenue. As part of the Sales Planning Division at (Name of Company), I evaluated competing revenue proposals, and helped implement the final corporate sales strategy, generating over \$200 million annually. Currently, as a Marketing Strategist for XYZ in South Florida, I coordinate multiple media channels, including newspaper, magazine, inserts, direct mail, online and television campaigns that exceed client expectations for driving business. I know my proven creativity, analytical insight and professionalism would be invaluable to increasing sales for COMPANY NAME.

Specific highlights of my accomplishments and qualifications include:

- Extensive experience analyzing and implementing sales strategies in name of industry
- Proven ability to recapture lost revenue through maximizing sales inventory efficiency
- Skilled in analyzing competitor offerings and countering with better business strategies

I am certain that my skills, experience and achievements will be critical to COMPANY NAME and that I will thrive as its POSITION NAME. As such, I will follow up with you next week to further discuss what I can contribute to your company's success. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,  
Name

