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SP461C Finding Work - Preparing a Resume

The University of Tennessee Agricultural Extension Service

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Finding Work

Preparing a Resume

A resume is a summary of your experiences, skills and accomplishments. The resume includes more detailed information than a letter of application. Ideally, it should make you and your attributes stand out in a positive way for an employer and show how you are different from the rest of the applicants. It is one way to get invited to a job interview.

Remember, the main purpose of a resume is to obtain a job interview. Therefore, your summary of relevant paid and non-paid work experiences, marketable skills and education should be written in terms of the prospective employer's needs. The resume should relate your skills and accomplishments to the requirements of the job offered by the employer.

Most resumes include the following:

- Your name, address and telephone number.
- A sentence describing your vocational objective.
- Education: list schools or colleges attended, and degrees or certificates received, as well as courses related to the job you are seeking.
- Competencies: list and describe your skills that are relevant to the job you are seeking. Use action words to describe these competencies. Figure 1 in Extension SP

461-B, Career Change, contains a list of sample action words, and this factsheet provides a model to help you develop sentences using action words. Select key phrases and words appropriate to the career field you wish to enter.

- Work experience: list part-time jobs, farm-related work experiences, other self-employment experiences and volunteer community work, along with full-time employment.
- References: it is best not to list references on your resume. Instead, include a statement that they are available upon request.

Model for Developing Resume Statements

Job applicants often fail to communicate adequately their past work experiences. When you use the following model for developing resume statements, it will enable you to describe and market your experiences more adequately.

Step 1: List an experience you have had as a farmer, homemaker or volunteer.

I was responsible for planning and overseeing the service of banquet meals.

Step 2: Select an action word (verb) to describe your experience (refer to **SP 461-B, Career Change**, for a list of action words).

action word: coordinated

Step 3: Describe experience performed.

quantity or size? 20
who or what? church volunteers

Step 4: Identify outcome.

purpose? banquet meals
for whom? large groups
final results? gross income of \$18,000

Step 5: Put steps 1-4 together to form an accomplishment statement for your resume.

Coordinated 20 church member volunteers
(verb) (quantity) (who)

in preparation of and serving banquet meals for large groups.
(purpose) (for whom)

Efforts resulted in gross income of \$18,000.
(final results)

See Figures 1 and 2 for examples of resumes that emphasize skills and experiences of a farmer and a homemaker. Both individuals have no work experience outside the home and farm. The persons described by these resumes have much to offer an employer in terms of experience and personal characteristics that would make each of them valuable employees. You certainly should include a section entitled "Work Experience" if you have worked for pay, either part-time or full-time, or in volunteer service.

Organize the content of your

resume to support the job for which you are applying in the cover letter. If, for instance, you are applying for a technical job, place your technical achievements and experiences at the beginning of the resume. In each entry of the resume, the sequence of information should support the job you are seeking.

Resume Format

A resume can be organized in one of two ways.

These ways are:

 **Chronological**-This kind of resume lists work experience by date, starting with current or last job and working back. This format is more traditional and is the best choice for those people whose careers have progressed without gaps. A sample is shown in Figure 1.

 **Functional**-This kind of resume stresses clusters of skills and abilities from past experiences. It relates these to the skills, knowledge and abilities required on the job for which you are making application. A sample is shown in Figure 2. Many individuals with little paid work experience, those re-entering the job market or those changing careers prefer to use a functional resume because it focuses attention on what you can do, rather than where you have been in the labor force.

It is a good idea to have someone read your resume before producing the final copy. The resume may be changed somewhat when you apply for different jobs. The sentence describing your objective should fit the job you are applying for. You may want to add or drop some statements in the work history or competencies sections so the resume includes only experiences that apply to the position you are

Figure 1
Sample Chronological Resume
(all jobs listed are volunteer work)

Mary Homemaker
Rural Route #1, Box 10
Somewhere, Tennessee 37000
(901) 000-0000

Vocational Objective

Dietary management trainee in food service establishment

Work Experience

- 1984-Present** Banquet Planner and Coordinator, Community Church, Somewhere, Tennessee
- Coordinate 20 church members in preparing and serving banquet meals to community groups of 25-350 persons. Efforts resulted in gross income of \$18,000. Responsible for quality control and management of finances. Plan menus and table decorations with community representatives.
- 1983-84** Kitchen Facility Planner, Community Church, Somewhere, Tennessee
- Committee chairman responsible for planning and remodeling church kitchen facilities to accommodate preparation and serving of food to large groups. Purchased all equipment by bid procedure for kitchen facilities.
- 1982-83** Market Researcher, Community Church, Somewhere, Tennessee.
- Member of committee which planned and developed a community market research questionnaire to determine the need for large group food service facilities. Assisted with conducting the survey and summarizing results.
- 1977-82** Instructor, Community Church High School Sunday School Class, Somewhere, Tennessee.
- Developed creative instructional materials appropriate for 15 youth aged 14-18 years. Initiated and planned social functions for the youth of the church.
- 1974-77** Teacher Assistant, Hillside Elementary School, Hill Community, Tennessee.
- Assisted third-and fourth-grade teachers in developing creative teaching materials. Provided math and reading tutorial services to 17 students during this period of time. Maintained accurate student records by detailing weekly tutorial sessions.

Education

Undergraduate work in elementary education, College of Florida, College Town, Florida, 1971-1973.

References

Will be furnished upon request.

Figure 2
Sample Functional Resume

John W. Doe
715 Clovis Drive
Somewhere, Tennessee 20000
(901) 555-6666

Vocational Objective

Sales management in a manufacturing firm

Areas of Competence

Sales Negotiated sales of farm commodities from 1976 to present. Dealt effectively with buyers and customers, including listening carefully to requests and suggestions, asking questions to identify needs and suggesting items that they may not know about. Handled merchandise exchanges and returns.

Management Scheduled family members and other employed farm workers and maintained records of their work activities and performance. Supervised and trained farm workers. Developed advertisements to promote church-sponsored community activities. Organized Sunday School materials and money-raising activities for church youth group. Planned and taught creative religious materials to 12-18 teenagers. Provided guidance to youth on a one-to-one basis.

Accounting Maintained financial records for a 480-acre farm business. Farm commodities included beef cattle, swine and grain crops. Three years of experience administering funds of the Lakeside Church Youth Group resulting from money-raising activities.

Work Experience

1975-Present Self-employed as a farmer.

1971-75 Sales clerk, ABC Small Equipment Supply Company, Somewhere, Tennessee.

Education

Graduated from Anywhere Technical College, Anywhere, Tennessee, 1980, with a degree in business management.

References

References will be furnished upon request.

seeking.

Remember to keep the resume short, forceful and marketable. It is essential that the resume be error-free and typed perfectly on a good quality bond paper, preferably white or off-white.

Personal Data Sheet

A personal data sheet is a short version of a resume. A data sheet is no longer than one page, while a resume may be two pages. Include personal information: your name,

address and telephone number. Also outline the most relevant information about your education, your work experience and special skills you have developed. The data sheet should be written in such a way that education, skills and work experience relate to the job for which you are applying. Some firms prefer a one-page data sheet instead of a resume. A concise one-page outline of applicant qualifications saves a potential employer time while reviewing several applications. An outline for personal data sheet can be found in Figure 3.

Selecting References

Selecting potential references is very important. Potential references should be contacted to obtain permission to use their names. Check that you have correct name spellings, addresses and telephone numbers before you give their names to potential employers. A firm may contact references either before or after an interview.

Include references who know you well and have positive things to say about you. They should include character references as well as people you may have worked for or with on committees or volunteer programs. It is advisable to use people who are professionals or are well-known in the community, such as pastors, business owners, Extension staff or teachers. An enthusiastic reference from a reputable source can make the difference in whether or not you get the job.

When you ask people to be references for you, give them a copy of your resume and update them on recent accomplishments. If possible, explain what type of job or jobs you're applying for.

It is best not to list references on your resume, but to indicate that they are available upon



Figure 3
Sample Personal Data Sheet

Name: _____ Telephone: _____

Address: _____

Education:

School
Courses or skills pertaining to job
Date of graduation
Degree of certification

Work Experience

Date: From ____ to
Name of Employer
Duties
(Start with most recent experience and work back.)

References:

Available upon request

request. Have the references typed on a separate sheet and repeat your name, address and telephone number on that sheet.

If the employer requests that you obtain letters from your references, you need to call the references, give them the name and address of the employer and ask them to send a letter. It is important to check with the employer in about two weeks to see if he/she actually received the letters.

Don't forget to thank those you use as references—you may want to use them again. Let them know the results of your job search.

Mailing the Resume or Personal Data Sheet

When mailing a resume or personal data sheet to a potential employer, include a letter of application (refer to **SP 461-E, Applying for a Job** for assistance in preparing this important letter). Remember to use a business envelope which has been properly addressed with the name of the business contact as well as your return address typed neatly and correctly placed on the envelope. Include correct postage to insure delivery.

References:

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Blackledge, Walter L. and Blackledge, Ethel H. **The Job You Want-How To Get It**, Third Edition. Dallas: South Western Publishing Company, 1983.

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