



Resume basics and helpful tips

By The N.M. Department of Workforce Solutions

For the Journal

Prospective employers may only have a few minutes to scan your resume when they are screening potential job candidates. The goal is to stand out and grab their attention by presenting a concise, well-organized resume. Your resume should reflect your unique experience and qualifications. One way to do that is by incorporating additional headings along with the basic, traditional headings of "Work Experience" and "Education."

Work Experience: After you write down all of your work experience, make note of positions you have held that are most relevant to the job opening and your career objective. Keep in mind that work experience is not limited to paid work. You can include internships, volunteer opportunities, and much more. Divide your work experience into these two areas, "Related Work Experience," and "Additional (or Other) Work Experience."

Usually your work experience begins with the most recent job first and includes the job title, employer's name, location of employment, dates of employment and a bulleted list of job duties and requirements.

Education: Like work experience, list your most recent education first. Include information such as the title of the degree, your major and program, as well as graduation month and year. Also list the name of the educational institution, city and state. Degrees can be abbreviated or spelled out, but be consistent throughout your entire resume. Include your GPA if it is something you would like to highlight.

Academic Awards, Scholarships, Scholastic Achievements, or Educational Highlights: This is a great resume heading to showcase your academic career and it works especially well as a separate heading if you have several awards or highlights you would like to include. Provide details about each, but limit the descriptions to two to three bullet points each.

Additional Skills: This additional heading can include an overview of skill sets you possess or can be specifically titled, such as "Computer Skills," or "Word Processing Skills." Read the job description to see if there is a skill heading you can use in your resume to directly tie in with the employer's needs.

Publications: Be sure to include any publications that emphasize your writing skills, artistry, or other skills that directly apply to the job you are applying for. Include both published work and publications that are in process. Only include published work that you are willing and able to provide to an interviewer or an interview panel.

Activities & Honors: Depending on how many activities and honors you would like to include, select those that best relate to your career objective and the job opportunity. List organizations by their full name; do not use abbreviations as they can stand for groups across very different industries. For example, NMA can stand for the "National Medical Association" or the "National Mining Association," which represent very different industries.

There are very few formal resume rules so you can create resume headings as you see fit. The headings listed above are only a few of the hundreds of possibilities.

The sequence of your headings is equally as important as the information that you chose to include. List the heading first that best applies to the job descriptions and employer needs, then order the remaining headings accordingly. Your final product will be a tailored well-structured resume that represents all of your qualifications and experience.

This is a regular column written by the N.M. Department of Workforce Solutions. For more information, go to www.dws.state.nm.us.

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