TIPS FOR A STANDOUT RESUME

The purpose of a resume is to highlight your skills and experience, and ultimately secure an interview. Most employers look at resumes for 10-15 seconds, so it needs to be visually appealing and grab the reader's attention. There's no one way to craft a resume, but you do want to make sure that it accurately describes your talents and abilities in a way that addresses the reader's needs.

HOW TO GET STARTED

- Consider what the employer is seeking, as well as your own skills, interests, and abilities. Self-reflection is critical to writing an effective resume.
- Brainstorm all your experiences. Consider any jobs, internships, volunteer work, leadership positions in student organizations, involvement in athletics, significant class projects, study abroad experience and any special skills or awards.
- Describe each experience in terms of tasks and responsibilities, but also consider skills developed/honed, accomplishments. Don't just tell the reader what you did. Tell them how well you did it.
- After creating a brainstorming list and beginning to refine your statements, then choose which items best represent yourself for any given position. Work with a CEO staff member to help prioritize your various activities and skills.
- Come to Drop-In Advising hours to have a draft of your resume reviewed.
- Schedule an appointment with a staff member in the CEO to focus your resume for particular positions.

ACCOMPLISHMENT STATEMENTS

- Resumes are YOUR advertising tool. Let your employer see all of your most positive qualities, skills and accomplishments.
- A well-crafted accomplishment statement describes your impact and results, adding depth to your resume and proof of your skills.
- A good approach for this is using the ACE Method = Action Verb + Context (task or skills) + End Result (What did you achieve? What was the impact? What did you learn?).
  - For example: "Created unique social media content using Canva and iMovie to strengthen brand recognition and increase Instagram followers by 10% in a 3-month period."
- Use action verbs, such as led, developed, and organized, instead of passive phrases to give your resume strength. Vary the words throughout the resume, and as appropriate, use words from the position description of the job to which you're applying. See the Action Word list for ideas.
  - For example "Worked with fellow students" can be strengthened to "Recruited and motivated students."
- Qualify and quantify your skills. Use numbers, dollar amounts and percentages to give a factual weight to your experience.
  - For example, "Developed 3 daily activities for a group of 15 preschool-aged children" more clearly demonstrates your skill than "Worked with children at a preschool."
- Start with your accomplishment, followed by your actions.
  - For example, "Increased sales by 20% utilizing social media marketing strategy," instead of "updated Facebook and Twitter."
- Avoid wordiness and unnecessary adjectives.
  - For example, "Provided training and mentoring to incoming college students" could be more succinctly stated as "Trained and mentored 15 freshman students."

A FEW MORE TIPS ON CONTENT

- It's important to tailor your resume to the reader, so you should revise your resume to fit the specific position for which you are applying. It doesn't have to be a major re-write, but consider ways to draw parallels between your qualifications and the job requirements. One strategy is to integrate "key words" that are used in the job advertisement, such as specific computer skills, foreign languages, or job responsibilities.
- A resume does not need to include everything you've ever done. It can be more effective to have fewer, related experience explained in more detail, than to list lots of unrelated experiences.
- Emphasize the experience and skills that are most relevant to the job for which you are applying. Section heading titles (for example, International Experience or Writing Experience) are a strategy to highlight skills and package related experiences.
- You may want to consider having multiple versions of your resume, particularly if you are interested in fields that may focus on different skills.
- Avoid salary information on your resume.
- Always tell the truth on your resume. Facts can be checked from former employers.

FORMAT

- Make sure your name and contact information (including professional email address) are prominent. Add your LinkedIn Profile address. Put your name on every page.
- Including a Job Objective on your resume is optional. You may include one if you have a very specific job in mind or if it would be difficult for an employer to understand your objective based on your resume. A well-written objective shares as much about what you can do for the organization as it does about your goal. For example, "Seeking entry-level position in public relations, where creative and innovative strategies will be utilized."
- The Summary section (also optional) should capture the essence of your characteristics, skills, and experience in several short phrases.
- The Education section, at a minimum, should include your Goucher degree and major, along with graduation date. You may also choose to highlight GPA, academic honors and study abroad. List your high school information only if it makes you stand out.
- Consider section headings that highlight your skills. Examples could be: Writing Experience, Organizational Experience, Leadership Experience, or any other skill set that matches your experience with the requirements of the job. It is appropriate to have more than one section to highlight different skills.
- Include additional categories on your resume such as Computer Skills, Language Skills, Awards, Professional Organizations, Publications and Presentations, as appropriate and applicable. Be sure to follow citation rules for the latter.

STYLE

- The ideal length of a resume is one-page, but it needs to be visually appealing. Fonts should be 10-12 points in size. Margins should be between .5 and 1 inch. Consider bullets, leave space between paragraphs, and allow for adequate margins.
- Avoid fancy graphics. Open resumes on multiple computers to make sure the format looks consistent on various systems.
- Be consistent throughout your resume, including how you write your dates, and whether you put your title or organization first.
- Within each section, list experiences in reverse chronological order.
- You do not need to include the phrase "References Available Upon Request."
- Always make sure the resume is error-free. Check for typos and grammatical errors. Proofread, and have others proofread as well.
- If you are mailing in your resume, print it on high quality bond or resume paper.
- If you are uploading your resume to an employer's online system, it is vital to remove all specialized formatting, like bold and bullets. Consider only the options available using the keyboard, like capital letters or a dash (-).
- If you are emailing your resume, you are advised to put your cover letter (For more information, see the Cover Letter Handout) and resume into one document and save as a PDF.
- When saving your resume on the computer, put your name in the title (i.e., John Gopher resume.) This will help employers differentiate your resume from other resumes.
- Prepare a separate reference sheet with the names, titles, and contact information of three people who will speak positively about you. Always ask for permission prior to including someone as a reference and give them a copy of your resume. For more information, see the Reference List Handout.

**For other tips & questions contact the CEO at 410-337-6191 or
visit the CEO website at www.goucher.edu/CEO**