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RÉSUMÉ

MAKEOVER

The Ultimate Guide to
Renovating Your Résumé

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Cindy Kenkel

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EXTREME RÉSUMÉ MAKEOVER

THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO
RENOVATING YOUR RÉSUMÉ

PLUS SECTIONS ON COVER LETTERS, THANK-YOU
NOTES, AND ELECTRONIC RÉSUMÉS

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**EXTREME RÉSUMÉ MAKEOVER:
THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO RENOVATING YOUR RÉSUMÉ**

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DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to Hailey and Tyler.
They top the list of my accomplishments.
—Cindy Kenkel

PREFACE

Preparing a résumé and cover letter can be an overwhelming challenge for college students. Most have had only minimal experience putting together such important documents. All too often, the final products end up selling the student short. While several exceptional books feature samples of professional résumés, very few feature quality samples targeted exclusively for students seeking an internship or their first professional position.

Trading Spaces . . . While You Were Out . . . Extreme Makeover . . . What Not to Wear . . . The Date Patrol. Our nation is obsessed with makeovers, so I have decided to play along. The *before* and *after* sample résumés will provide students with concrete visual examples to use as models for their final product.

I've reviewed résumés from students who attend institutions around the country, and I rarely find versions that are as good as they could be. Readers who first glance at the samples may even think the *before* samples look ready to go. In reality, the *after* versions will greatly enhance a student's ability to secure an interview that will eventually lead to a job.

Of course, no résumé should leave home without a date, so I have also included the résumé's partner—the cover letter. For years, this document took backstage because it was, to be honest, boring. This book features samples using the “two-column” or “T-format,” which demonstrates exceptional targeting to the employer's needs. Letters using this format can be easily adapted to fit each position.

I have blended knowledge gained from spending 12 years as a human resource manager, one year directing a highly successful outplacement program (we won an award from the governor of Missouri for our effort), and eight years of teaching college business communication to create this user-friendly, do-it-in-a-weekend guide to creating résumés and cover letters that really work.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This book was possible only through the help of hardworking, talented students in my courses who were willing to write and rewrite their résumés too many times to count. One of the things that separates this book from others on the market is that the résumés and letters were written by real students instead of professional résumé writers. All of the students agreed to allow their documents to be published; their names and identification information have been changed.

Without the help of two truly exceptional students, Kerra Siefering and Kari Frerking, the layout and finishing touches would not have happened. Dr. Mona Casady, from Southwest Missouri State University, also provided exceptional assistance early in the book's creation. The Career Services department at Northwest Missouri State University also worked diligently with my students to help perfect their résumés.

Keeping with the theme of featuring student work, Lindsay Little, a student in our mass communications department, created the professional cover page first used for this book. Adam Jones, Anvar Gabidoulina, and Joni Adkins all helped develop the step-by-step process covered in the electronic résumé section. Together we have prepared a foolproof list of directions for even novice computer users. Katie Knobbe and Holly Eschenbauch often pitched in, researching and helping to fine-tune sections of the book.

A special thanks to the "go to" person in our department, Ann Clark, for her efforts to make this project happen.

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Getting Started

Your first step is to review several résumés to get a feel for what they will entail. Choose samples closely related to your field of study. As you review these, highlight information that relates to you. Now is *not* the time to get dazzled by the layout; just focus on content and information.

The first hurdle you face is deciding what to include on your résumé. No hard and fast rules in this arena exist, but some excellent guidelines are available. After helping over 1,800 students prepare résumés over the last few years, I have determined that one of the major struggles you face is separating content from format. Using the résumé worksheet has virtually eliminated this obstacle. Even if you have already started your résumé, it is critical that you fill out the worksheet prior to worrying about format.

Put everything on your worksheet. Skip sections if they do not pertain to you, but be careful not to filter at this point. You are brainstorming, not evaluating. Often, asking a parent, friend, or roommate to help you with this exercise yields more complete results. Keep this worksheet readily available because it is an excellent tool to use as you fill out applications, prepare for employment interviews, and tweak your résumé to fit each position for which you are applying. After reading through the “Frequently Asked Questions” section, you will be ready to fill out your worksheet and get started.

■ FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Do I need an objective?

Experts really disagree on this issue. You will hear some who adamantly believe you need one and others who are just lukewarm about objectives. As long as your cover letter clearly identifies your target, you *officially* do not need one. My suggestion is to include either a specifically targeted objective or a summary section to open your résumé.

During your parents’ era, we used flowery objectives that really added nothing to the document. Today these would yield the gag reflex from most hiring professionals. Stay away from this type of objective. My first résumé objective went something like this: “To effectively utilize the skills and knowledge I have obtained studying management to improve the productivity at your organization.” Now, including the title or department (that often is a keyword) in which you are interested is enough for an objective.

What is a summary? Is it the same thing as a profile?

Yes, a summary and a profile are the same thing. Using a preview of your material perfectly targeted to the employer’s position or organization will most effectively utilize the 30 to 45 seconds that hiring professionals will spend initially reviewing your résumé. It sets the tone and quickly identifies you as a serious contender for a position or organization. See Andy Paxton’s (pp. 86–87) and Angelo Rodriquez’s résumés (pp. 88–89).

Why do you want me to fill out the profile section of the worksheet last?

I have included this section early in your worksheet because it belongs early in the résumé. However, I have asked you to complete it after you have filled out the rest of the worksheet because it is a summary. This section of your worksheet needs to fit each job you are targeting based on the skills you have to offer. I once had a student working on a group paper ask for input on his section (the conclusion). When I asked to review the body of the paper so that I could help, he was stumped; he had not actually written the paper yet. Needless to say, I could not offer any feedback at this stage of the