

Resume Writing Tips for Preparing A Curriculum Vitae

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What Makes A Curriculum Vitae Stand Out?

You'll generate a better response with your curriculum vitae if it is well organized and is packed with relevant information to match and support your professional, academic or research objective.

As a Job Placement Specialist for the University of Washington, Bothell I worked with students submitting curriculum vitae for graduate programs. In this capacity, I applied several unique strategies when writing each curriculum vitae. The first was to prioritize and list the most relevant academic, research, volunteer or work history experience first within the curriculum vitae. The second was to include an Objective and Summary of Qualifications section at the top of each C.V. The third was to incorporate many of the strategies and resume writing techniques you'll learn by perusing the resume tips in this site as well as in my sister site which offers 40 Free Resume and Job Search Workshops.

These strategies proved to be extremely effective and boosted the acceptance rate of students applying for highly competitive graduate programs - many of which accepted only one to twelve students out of 300 to 600 applicants. My endeavors and success in this arena were recognized and commented on by the Director of Student Activities as a result of students reporting their acceptance into graduate programs.

Preparing effective C.V.'s presents a unique challenge due to length, which can make them boring and result in important data being buried or lost in such a long document. As a result, prioritizing your top skills and experience to be presented in the first or uppermost section of your C.V. makes sense. Then detail additional educational, employment or academic experience.

In this way you will maximize important criteria which you do not want to be overlooked by academic or hiring committees.

Who Needs A Curriculum Vitae?

A curriculum vitae is often required for those applying to graduate or professional programs, employment with international firms, or when promoting oneself within professional and academic fields.

How Does a Curriculum Vitae Differ From A Regular Resume?

A curriculum vitae is longer than the average 1-2 page resume because it provides a greater range of information which can include:

- Professional, Vocational or Research Objective
- Summary of Qualifications
- Professional Licenses or Certifications
- Education including Post Graduate, Graduate and Undergraduate Degrees and Studies
- Listing of Relevant Course work to Match Career or Academic Objective
- Educational or Professional Honors or Awards
- Scientific or Academic Research, Laboratory Experience and Related Skills
- Description of Thesis or Dissertation, Papers Written, Publications
- Academic or Professional Presentations
- Related Extracurricular Activities, Professional and Association Memberships
- Community Involvement
- Work Experience - Paid or Volunteer
- Technical and Specialized Skills such as Computer Programming or Laboratory Instrumentation
- Interests - Future Academic or Professional Goals
- Travel / Exposure to Cultural Experiences
- Foreign Language Skills
- Additional Information that May Support Objective or Qualifications

How Do I Get Started?

Writing a curriculum vitae can seem overwhelming but can be made easier by organizing your background. To begin, put each of the headings listed above--and any others that are relevant--at the top of several sheets of paper (using a computer makes this even easier). Once you've done that then begin filling in your information for topics such as those listed above.

Remember To Be Descriptive

When describing your background be descriptive, use numbers and paint a broad range of your experience. For example, compare the following section from Sandra's before curriculum vitae. It is representative of what the rest of her C.V. looked like.

Professional Goal: Nurse Practitioner in rural setting.

Education: June 1996 -- Bachelor of Science in Nursing, University of Utah

Employment: August 1972 - Present
Staff Nurse - Duties include primary care of patients.
Harborview Medical Center

June 1988 - August 1990

Staff Nurse - Member of the IV Team.
Harborview Medical Center

Now compare the after curriculum vitae, shown below, that I created while working with Sandra. Which one does a better job of pulling together the best of Sandra's qualifications for acceptance into a Nurse Practitioner program? This program specialized in training of Nurse Practitioners for rural community service.

Objective and Summary of Qualifications

Seeking acceptance into a Nurse Practitioner Program with goal of providing rural community service utilizing my extensive primary care background.

Over 18 years Registered Nursing experience includes:

- Providing full-range of nursing care to patients and families of all ages from economically and culturally diverse populations.
- Management in a department serving over 30,000 patients annually.
- Training and supervising over 40 R.N.'s; assuming direct responsibility for total patient care; narcotics control, assessment and risk management.
- Bachelor of Science in Nursing with Honors, University of Utah 1972

As you can see, Sandra's after C.V. starts off much stronger and summarizes her top skills at a glance. You may be thinking, "But, I don't have any valuable work experience." If that's true, then follow a similar strategy but instead list whatever academic, volunteer or cocurricular activities that form a foundation of skills or knowledge that relate to and support your objective. The section from Sandra's C.V. shown above was then followed by many of the topics listed earlier on this page.

\$9,000 Salary Increase

The first resume workshop in this site shows how Fran's after resume resulted in a \$9,000 salary increase. Fran wanted a \$33,000 Corporate Customer Representative job but her resume created an image of her being at a \$20,000 to 24,000 salary level -- that's \$9,000 to \$13,000 beneath her goal.

What Level Does Your Resume Market You At?

If you are curious to see what level your resume is marketing you at ... then be sure to read and use the graphing techniques in my first workshop. By graphing the job titles used in Fran's resume it's easy to see why her resume failed ... and once you understand this ... you will understand why the majority of resumes fail. You'll then understand how to analyze your job titles and see if you are better off using them or replacing them with skill headings that market you more effectively.

Most People Have Job Titles that Weaken Their Image

I estimate that at least 85% of all job seekers have job titles unrelated to their current career goals ... and that they are much better off using skill headings rather than job titles to land higher salaries and double and triple their interview rates.

For example, Fran had been a Directory Operator but in most people's minds that doesn't sound like she's at the level of a Corporate Customer Representative making \$33,000 ... that's because most people don't view directory operators as providing true customer service. Most people say that Directory Operator sounds like someone making only \$20,000. However, by using the 12 Questions in my Proven Resumes Series, Fran wrote a new description of her duties as a Directory Operator that described her being selected out of 100 Directory Operators to provide specialized Customer Service to the Governor's Office and Political Dignitaries in the Washington State Capitol ... now that information begins to change our image of Fran doesn't it? That makes her sound much more like someone being able to command \$33,000.

Which sounds like a better match for the \$33,000 Corporate Customer Service Representative goal... her old job title of Directory Operator ... or a skill heading like Customer Service Representative to State of Washington Account. In Fran's actual resume we used the heading of Customer Service Representative but you can see how you can play with skill headings to control and elevate your image ... this is one strategy I explain in detail with examples throughout my book, Proven Resumes: Strategies That Have Increased Salaries, and one of the strongest things I can offer you as a resume writer ... just in case you don't have the time or patience to write your own.

Going from 0% to 100% Interview Rate

By using skill headings that matched her goal, Fran went from a 0% interview rate to a 100% interview rate -- meaning none of her prior resumes had landed an interview but her new resume landed an interview for each position she applied for.

Click here to [learn other ways we improved Fran's resume and landed her a job paying \\$9,000 more](#) click here to [read my first set of resume workshops!](#) If you've entered my site via this page, be sure to go to my main website's home page for an overview of more than [60 Free Resume & Job Search Workshops](#) that include tons of Resume Tips for 45 Career Fields, Job Search, Electronic Resume, Cover Letter, Interviewing, Networking and Confidence Building strategies.

The testimonials throughout my site describe salary increases ranging from \$10,000 to \$30,000 and more. Here's one of my most recent ones:

Regina, the resume you wrote caught the attention of the world's leading software manufacturer. Thanks for helping inspire me through your thoughtful questions and objective interpretation of my work history.

I'm sure it made a big difference in my ability to be recognized in a competitive environment and cross the \$100,000 threshold. By the way, the offer I accepted was an increase of \$25K annually (21% increase).

Rachel Pizarro, Senior Sales Account Executive / Operations Manager

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In Summary

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