

Functional Resumes

Functional resumes highlight your abilities, such as hiring, managing or coaching, rather than your chronological work history. You'll still need to summarize your work history, but this is usually done at the bottom of your resume.

Who Should Use a Functional Resume?

A functional resume is particularly useful for people who:

- Have gaps in their work history.
- Are reentering the workforce.
- Have frequently changed jobs.
- Are looking to transition into new careers.
- Don't exactly fit the mold of what recruiters are looking for in the positions they want.

The reason functional resumes work well in these situations is that many of us have acquired skills while working that are very transferable. For example, if you have worked as a retail manager, chances are you were responsible for hiring, training, coaching, evaluating and handling employee relations issues.

If you were to submit this information in a chronological resume, there's a good chance a hiring manager (or computer) might skip right by you, because you did not hold the title of human resources manager, even if 50 percent of your day was spent dealing with HR-related issues.

It all comes down to how you package yourself. You can give employers the same information, only in a new and improved package. This is bound to get you more interviews, which will increase your chances of landing the job you want.

Source: Monster.com

Should You Consider a Functional Format for Your Resume?

Among job seekers who should consider a functional format:

- Those with very diverse experiences that don't add up to a clear-cut career path.
- College students with minimal experience and/or experience unrelated to their chosen career field.
- Career-changers who wish to enter a field very different from what all their previous experience points to.
- Those with gaps in their work history, such as homemakers who took time to raise a family and now wish to return to the workplace. For them, a chronological format can draw undue attention to those gaps, while a functional resume enables them to portray transferable skills attained through such activities as domestic management and volunteer work.
- Military transitioners entering a different field from the work they did in the military.
- Job-seekers whose predominate or most relevant experience has been unpaid, such as volunteer work or college activities (coursework, class projects, extracurricular organizations, and sports).
- Those who performed very similar activities throughout their past jobs who want to avoid repeating those activities in a chronological job listing.
- Job-seekers looking for a position for which a chronological listing would make them look "overqualified."
- Older workers seeking to deemphasize a lengthy job history.

If you can look at a chronological resume without a stated career objective and know exactly what field the jobseeker is headed toward and would be good at, then the chronological format probably is working just fine. But if you can't guess what the jobseeker wants to do and would be good at by looking at the chronology of past jobs, a functional format may be indicated.

The functional format also can work well for college students because it allows skills attained from experiences other than paid employment to be listed within the skills clusters. For example, one student chose leadership as one of her skills clusters, and she listed the following supporting experiences, none of them paid employment:

Leadership

- Selected as president-elect of Omicron Delta Kappa honorary and vice president of Phi Eta Sigma honorary
- Acquainted new students with campus as orientation leader
- Serve as president of residence hall on Residence Hall Council
- Function as vice president for intellectual development and assistant recruitment chair for social sorority

It's true that functional formats have been the subject of some employer backlash in recent years. Some employers are unaccustomed to the functional format, and they may become confused or even irritated by functional resumes. Recruiters/headhunters particularly disdain functional formats, so this approach should never be used if you are primarily targeting recruiters with your job search. Employers in conservative fields, such as banking, finance, and law are not big fans of functional formats, nor are international employers. Functional formats also are not acceptable on many online job boards.

Some employers like to know what you did in each job. One solution is to structure your resume in a mostly functional format but include a bare-bones work history in reverse chronological order, creating what is variously known as a chrono-functional, hybrid, or combination format. Such a work-history section need include only job title, name and location of employer, and dates of employment. You don't need to list what you did in each job because that information already is listed in your functional section.

To make your functional resume as reader-friendly as possible for employers, include as much context as you can within each functional description. That way, the employer has a better idea of which skill aligns with which job. In the above leadership-skills example, for instance, the student tells where she demonstrated each skill, thus making helping the employer connect her skills with the experience that produced those skills.

If you're unsure whether a functional resume is right for you, try it both ways and show the two formats to people in the field you wish to enter. See which one they feel presents your skills more effectively.

Source: CareerInfoNet.com

Special Points for Experienced Professionals to Consider

For your professional experience, list items that feature your level of:

Accountability

Examples:

- # employees supervised
- # accounts managed
- # vendors negotiated with
- \$ value of budget managed
- \$ value / # products of inventory managed
- \$ value / scale / size of projects managed
- \$ value / scale / size of contracts negotiated

Achievement

Examples:

- \$ or % increase in revenues
- \$ or % increase in profits
- \$ or % decrease in costs
- \$ or % project completed under budget
- % increase in staff productivity
- recognition for service provided or results produced

You can highlight your level of accountability and achievement for a specific timeframe (day, week, month, quarter, year, etc.), and you can use numbers stated as averages, ranges, or close approximations.

NAME

Address – City State Zip

Phone

Email

OBJECTIVE

Very concisely and specifically state the type of occupation you are pursuing.

QUALIFICATIONS

- Write three or four bulleted statements that summarize why you would be good at your job objective. Each statement should be no longer than two lines.
- Your statements should highlight your relevant strengths such as experience, core skills, special training, community activities, and personality traits.
- Prioritize the statements in this section so the most relevant ones are displayed first.

PROFESSIONAL STRENGTHS

Key Skill 1

- Write three or more statements about employment or volunteer activities in which you used this skill.
- Quantify results of your accomplishments when possible and appropriate. Refer to how you positively affected the organization, the bottom line, your co-workers, or your customers.
- Mention awards or commendations you received that required this skill.
- If you used this skill to solve a problem, briefly describe the problem and result.
- Prioritize the statements so that the most relevant ones are listed first.

Key Skill 2

- Same.

Key Skill 3

- Same.

Key Skill 4 (optional)

- Same.

WORK HISTORY

Job Title, Organization, City, State, 20xx-present

Job Title, Organization, City, State, 20xx-20xx

Job Title, Organization, City, State, 19xx-20xx

EDUCATION

Degree, Major, School, 19xx

[LIST OTHER SECTIONS THAT APPLY]

Jane Doe

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PROFILE

Experienced professional seeking a position in higher education student services. Strengths include a background of extensive counseling experience, effective listening and communication skills with diverse populations, tactfully addressing and resolving client and operational issues, and successfully managing departmental functions and personnel.

PROFESSIONAL STRENGTHS

Counseling / Advising

- Provided comfort, offered suggestions, and made referrals for victims of crimes such as domestic battery, sexual assault, and verbal abuse.
- Initiated conversations with perpetrators to discuss rationale for correcting their behavior and ways to lead more productive and rewarding lifestyles.
- Met with retail associates to diplomatically address ways to rectify issues regarding work performance and customer satisfaction.
- Conducted sessions of encouragement for retail associates who expressed dismay or frustration about failed attempts for promotions.

Communication

- Conducted presentations to elementary school students on the physical dangers and social detriments of joining street gangs.
- Interacted calmly and patiently with witnesses and victims to collect information about crimes and to possibly ascertain leads and motives for offenses.
- Assisted with directing monthly general staff meetings to provide store updates and to conduct workshops on workplace safety.
- Maintained extensive contact with police base to apprise dispatcher of updates and needs, ensuring all information was relayed clearly.

Analytical / Problem-Solving

- Applied attentive listening and strong critical thinking to satisfactorily troubleshoot issues customers expressed regarding service, merchandise, pricing, and store policies.
- Assessed criminal incidents quickly yet carefully to determine appropriate course of action for assisting victims, detaining perpetrators, and preventing further damages.
- Carefully observed patterns of neighborhood routines and gatherings of people to keep aware of abnormal and determine potential problems
- Evaluated the individual and group performance of 15 employees, and provided frequent feedback to promote positive behaviors and to offer suggestions for improving deficiencies.

Organization

- Produced documentation on criminal incidents, assuring all reports were characterized by attention to organization, detail, accuracy, and integrity.
- Generated balanced monthly work schedules for 10 full-time and 5 part-time retail associates for one sales floor department.
- Coordinated training for new retail associates in the areas of cashiering, customer assistance, stockroom operations, product and sales displays, and opening and closing functions.
- Maintained a departmental merchandise inventory of approximately 1500 unique items valued at a sum total of more than \$500,000.

WORK EXPERIENCE

Camping Equipment Department Manager, XYZ Retail Company, Orland Park, IL, 20xx-20xx
Patrol Officer, Anytown Police Department, Anytown, IL, 19xx-20xx

EDUCATION

B.A., Sociology, ABC College, City, IL, 19xx

COMPUTER SKILLS

Word, Excel, Access, PowerPoint, Outlook

VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

Co-Chair, Food Pantry Drive, Cass Elementary School Mothers' Club, 20xx
Mentor, Big Brothers Big Sisters of DuPage County, 20xx-20xx

AWARDS

Gold Star Customer Service Award, XYZ Retail Company, 20xx
Community Service Commendation, Anytown Police Department, 19xx

JOHN A. DOE

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(708) 555-1111

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OBJECTIVE

Sales management executive position

QUALIFICATIONS

Accomplished 15-year career encompassing strengths in administrative management, human resources, and fundraising. Demonstrated aptitude for developing and implementing effective comprehensive business plans, including all marketing efforts. Special talent for building a positive work environment for all staff. Consistent record of noteworthy achievements in operations and budget management for non-profit entities. Proficient in Word, Excel, and PowerPoint software applications. Fluently bilingual in English and Polish.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Administration/Management:

- Planned and managed business operations for non-profit organizations, including finance, budgeting, facilities management, staffing, programming, and public relations.
- Prepared a comprehensive business operating plan with short-range and long-range goals.
- Negotiated contractual agreements pertaining to purchase of property, rental of facilities valued at \$2 million, refinancing, and construction/remodeling projects.
- Balanced budget after long history of deficits.
- Supervised seven department directors and support staff.

Human Resources/Personnel:

- Managed all facets of a Human Resources Department, including the start-up of a new department.
- Experienced in recruiting, interviewing, placement, and evaluating personnel (program managers, departmental supervisors, constructions/trades, educations, and support staff).
- Conducted orientation and wrote curricula for training.
- Researched, presented for CEO approval, and administered employee benefits program.
- Developed all personnel forms.

Resource Development/Fundraising:

- Directed resource development programs for a multi-state region.
- Targeted untapped cities through direct mail, generating \$25,000 in revenue.
- Achieved \$10,000 through direct mail alone, using segmented lists with the genesis series of a letter.
- Developed prospect lists and data files for new donor acquisitions.
- Assumed planning role for an annual banquet and generated \$20,000 in profits (prior year's event lost money).
- Assisted in developing a deferred giving and financial counseling program.

EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

Director of Personnel/Resource Development: United Ministries, Inc., Fresno, CA	20xx-Present
Associate Pastor: Intercity Ministries, Norfolk, VA	20xx-20xx
Minister: Fellowship Alliance, Norfolk, VA	19xx-20xx

EDUCATION

Master of Arts in Business Administration, Saint Xavier University
Certificate in Pastoral Ministry, American Catholic University
Bachelor of Science in Religious Studies, Saint Xavier University

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OBJECTIVE

Sales/marketing position in the personal computer industry.

EDUCATION

Bachelor of Science, Management/Consumer and Managerial Economics
XYZ University, June 20xx

AREAS OF EFFECTIVENESS

MARKETING/SALES

- Persuasively marketed personal computer hardware and software.
- Developed and implemented marketing and advertising strategies.
- Performed sales work for auto parts chain store with annual sales exceeding \$35 million.
- Participated in numerous microcomputer trade shows.
- Recognized for impressive sales record and received quarterly awards for outstanding performance in exceeding goals.

ORGANIZATION/PLANNING

- Helped design education and entertainment software for personal computers.
- Assisted with developing peripheral hardware for microcomputers.
- Implemented parts department reorganization for enhanced workflow.
- Produced effective in-store and window displays.

COMMUNICATIONS

- Listened attentively and communicated courteously with customers and employees.
- Revised policy manuals and developed curricula for training sessions.
- Trained and supervised sales personnel on store operations and customer service.
- Presented material to supervisors and managers on procedures to improve accuracy for inventory control.

EMPLOYMENT

Marketing/Sales Intern, Progressive Microproducts, Chicago, IL, 1/20xx-5/20xx
Management Trainee/Salesperson, Grand Auto, Inc., Chicago, IL, 5/20xx-12/20xx
Salesperson, Consumers Distributing Company, Markham, IL, 5/19xx-5/20xx

ACTIVITIES

Member, American Marketing Association, 20xx-20xx
Fundraising Chairperson, Markham Service Club, 20xx-20xx
Youth Club Volunteer, Markham Park District, 20xx-20xx

REFERENCES

Available upon request.