

How to Brand Your Awesomeness: Resume Tips

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With spring break just around the corner and summer internship postings up, it's an excellent time to find opportunities out there and prepare yourself well to get them.

For the upcoming spring break especially, look for opportunities to go abroad as it will give you a global edge on your resume and offer invaluable insights to your worldview.

CARP's mission statement emphasizes that students become global citizens. The skills of a global citizen are best acquired through an international experience, which is why CARP is organizing [international exchange trips](#) for spring break 2017 for any college student ready to go on an adventure and develop their communication skills, adaptability, and global awareness.

Before even starting the application process, you need to figure out what you're looking for in an internship or job (we recommend using the [WISER goal-setting method](#) for additional help).

Once you know have an idea and some tangible opportunities in front of you, it's time to organize your resume, which is the prominent way to showcase who you are to the world.



The Resume Landscape Today

A resume is an account of your education, qualifications, and previous experience. It is a marketing document intended for a prospective employer or educator to get to know you. The general rule is that a resume needs to be concise and clear so include exactly what you need to communicate.

A [recent study](#) on recruiter decision-making found that recruiters spend only 6 seconds reviewing an individual resume. This clearly indicates two things:

Your resume needs to pop, and

Your resume needs to be easy on the eyes.

A solution to the first point is to add some “subtle” color to your resume. As for the second point, you need to pay attention to the layout of your resume, the font you are using, and the type of resume format you are using (that makes sense for your industry).

A functional resume is a good place to start – where you don’t include all your experiences, just the most relevant ones.

Alternatively, a chronological resume might be a good fit if you don’t have your heart set on an industry, in which case you include all your experiences in chronological order starting from the most recent and working backwards.

It can be daunting to start a resume or even to update one. It’s a difficult task, but a marginally important one to increase your chances of landing your dream job (or any job for that matter). This is a sample resume that includes helpful suggestions for college students just entering the world of internships or entry-level jobs.



1. Digitize your contact information

Make it as easy as possible for potential employers to contact you. By hyperlinking your email address and LinkedIn profile, you are just one click away from getting an interview. If you include your home address, only include your city, state, and zip code to protect yourself from identity theft. Use active links for any other social media links you may have that are relevant to your employer.

2. Provide a clear, concise statement

Here is where you provide a summary statement characterizing your experience and employment goals. This should relate to the job you are applying to. As a college student, it is unlikely that you will hold a full time position for an established employer so providing a summary statement reflecting your career interests is helpful.

However, it is highly recommended to replace the summary header with a header of your area of expertise followed by a professional synopsis that states your years of experience, job history, and big career achievements once you have them.

3. Keep your education at the top

As a current student with little professional experience, it’s best to showcase your education closer to the top of the resume. The rule of thumb is to keep your education closer to the top with details like GPA, honors and distinctions, and relevant courses or projects as long it adds value. Typically, the more professional experience you gain post college, the less relevant your college details will become. In that case, stick your education towards the end of your resume with details limited to degree specifications and certificates.

4. Tell them about your relevant activities

Chances are, if you’re in college, you are not only undergoing coursework, but you are also involved in clubs and volunteer opportunities. Put these down as long as they are relevant to the job you are applying to. Be creative and think of task descriptions for the work you did for a club or organization and your position with these groups, i.e. the sample resume includes experience at “The Global Current” which is a campus radio club, but the wording illustrates the club duties as a professional job experience. This will show your employer that you are thinking like a professional even if the experience technically isn’t.

5. Describe what you did, not what you are

For each relevant experience, use [action verbs](#) to describe the tasks you performed. Be sure to explain what you did and not your title or job description. Specific and measurable achievements (data, money, time, etc.) where possible shows tangible results. Try to keep the descriptions to one line per bullet and 2-4 bullet points.

Many companies out there use software to sift through the hundreds of resumes they receive so make sure to use the right [industry keywords](#). You can also mirror the language of the job posting for a higher chance of beating the machine. Employers want to know you did your research.

6. Include some global edge

In an increasingly internationalized world, employers are looking for candidates with a global mindset based on experience living, working, or even volunteering abroad. Include in your Relevant Experience section some international experience whether it's a week-long service project or a 3-month internship/volunteership abroad and the unique skills you developed.

Alternatively, you can include a study abroad experience in your Education section with a bullet point or two about its impact on your studies whether you took some interesting, eye-opening courses or participated in various field trips.

If you do not have any international experience, it's highly recommended to look for those opportunities, whether it's with [CARP's international exchange programs](#), the international office on your campus, or with some other organization. This experience will put you ahead of the competition.

7. Finish off with some "special" skills

Employers may want to know you have other skills that can be useful. Display your language skills, technological skills, and even your relevant interests such as a subscription to an organization's newsletter or a news outlet. Do not include skills that are flagged important for the job posting since these should be highlighted in your Relevant Experience section. These should be additional skills that you may not have had the chance to use in a professional environment just yet or that are minor to the job posting.



Final Notes

Once again, resume-building takes time, effort, and skill so remember to constantly review and improve your resume as you acquire new experiences and skill sets. Taking the time to prepare every detail of your resume will also better equip you for interviews to follow since you will have the language to effectively explain your qualifications and experience.