How to Write a Civilian Resume with Military Experience

LUX ET VERITAS

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How to Write a Civilian Resume with Military Experience

This packet is intended for the veterans who have returned to college and are searching for a job in the civilian environment. No doubt your military career is studded with accomplishments, but you need to figure out how to communicate those experiences in terms that will help you become a successful candidate for a civilian position. Writing an effective resume is the first step and here are some instructions that will help you achieve your goals**.**

Before You Start

Find your civilian job objective

You can't effectively market yourself for a civilian job if you don't have a clearly defined goal. Before writing your resume, research occupations and pinpoint a specific career path. If you find that you cannot set only one goal, you can have multiple resumes.

Collect Data

Before writing your civilian resume you need to assemble your factual data. Collect data on your work history, education, volunteer work, school activities, and your experiences in the military. Details about what kinds of military experiences to have in your resume will be elaborated on later in this packet.

Building Your Resume

Create a resume that employers will want to read

Now that your objective is defined, you are ready to write an eye-catching resume. The purpose of a resume is to convince the employer that you have valuable skills and experiences that will benefit the company. Know what the employer wants and write your resume to their needs and job postings. **Research** what types of skills and experiences employers are seeking. What aspects of your military and civilian background are most relevant to this field/position?

Basic Resume Content

1. Heading This usually looks best if it is centered in the top middle part of the page. It includes:
  ➢ Your full name. You can use all capital letters and use a bold, large, font to make it stand out.
  ➢ Your complete address.
  ➢ Telephone numbers: home and cell phone should be listed. Do not include your phone number for a resume you are posting on a public website, such as LinkedIn.
  ➢ Email address. Use an email address that does not include any language or references that could be perceived as unprofessional or inappropriate for the workplace.

❖   Any information that does not relate to your goal should be eliminated or de-emphasized; this includes any unrelated military awards, training and distinctions. For example, a medal won for rifle marksmanship doesn't belong on a civilian resume. This is often the hardest step for ex-military personnel.

Keep In Mind

❖   To be sure that an employer can comprehend the skills, experiences and knowledge you have to offer, **avoid overuse of military jargon** when describing titles held, duties performed, training completed and awards received. Employers with no military background don't understand military terminology, so translate these into words they can understand.

❖   For instance, consider describing soldiers as "staff" instead of "corpsmen" or "platoon members" and the term "supplies" can be used to describe artillery, uniforms, ammunition, etc. Show your resume to faculty, staff and non-military friends and ask them to point out terms they don't understand.

2. Qualifications A statement summarizing your basic qualifications and skills without identifying a particular job target.

Examples of demilitarized accomplishment statements:
- ➢ Excellent organizational and computer skills.
- ➢ Supervised warehouse operations including receiving merchandise and delivery of merchandise to various unit locations.
- ➢ Supervised over 40 personnel and coordinated with subcontractors.
- ➢ Maintained oversight of security personnel at a location responsible for storage of $33m perishable and non-perishable products.

3. Education/Training The general rule is to put those experiences from your background that best qualify you for the job. For recent graduates, this would be your education. After three to five years of experience, consider placing education after related experiences. List your most recent degrees first and continue in reverse chronological order.

This section may contain:
- ➢ Degrees, certificates or licenses awarded.
- ➢ Names of location (city and state only) of schools and programs
- ➢ Year degree was received or is anticipated. Do not list all years attended.
- ➢ Grade-point average or placement in your class, if it is high.
- ➢ Honors
  - o May be included as a separate major heading, or as a subheading under education.
- ➢ Related Courses
  - o May also be a subheading of education. Four to eight courses could be listed, with the more advanced and related courses first. These should be courses in fields of study directly related to the positions for which you are applying.

Quantify Your Experience

❖   An effective resume will include quantifiable information. Include the number of "staff" that you "supervised" (note the use of civilian work place terms). If you were responsible for large pieces of "equipment" then estimate the value of the equipment. Employers will see that you were entrusted with those responsibilities, which are marketable traits. Any experience that reveals your leadership, problem-solving and creative skills will be appreciated by an employer.

4. Related Experience/Employment

❖ Your military career has offered you excellent opportunities for training, practical experience and advancement. Present your accomplishments so the average civilian understands the importance of your achievements.

There are various ways of presenting your experience:

➢ All related experience (paid, volunteer, internships, etc.) could be placed in this area.
➢ Several distinct headings identifying the kind of experience could be used, such as "Military," "Medical," or "Teaching."
➢ Two headings could be used; "Related Experience" and "Other Experience."
➢ Any combination of headings can be used. Select those that best describe the types of experience you have.

Suggestions for collecting data on your experience:
➢ Thoroughly review your work history.
➢ List every job you've had. Describe the things you did well and give examples.
➢ Describe your specific responsibilities, identify machinery, equipment or tools you used. You can use phrases, not complete sentences.
➢ **Use action verbs in your description (see list enclosed at end of packet).**
➢ Note skills, accomplishments, and examples that illustrate your success or proficiency
➢ Use this same process to describe volunteer, school and outside experiences that utilized skills that will be beneficial in the work place.

Your Description should include:
➢ The name of the company.
➢ Job Titles: After your job title, you can add information that best describes what you did, particularly if your title doesn't fully explain everything that you did.
➢ Include dates worked, including month/year

Make Your Military Background Stand Out

❖ Your military background is an asset and should be marketed as such. Many employers realize the value of bringing veterans on board. Attributes honed in the military include dedication, leadership, teamwork, positive work ethic and cross-functional skills.

❖ **If you fear a potential employer won't realize the significance of your military experience, make sure your resume clearly communicates the value that you bring.**

❖ Focus on describing the awards and accomplishments that are most relevant to the type of career you are pursuing.

Here's an example of incorporating a military award so employers understand its value:

"Received Army Achievement Medal for completing 400+ medical evaluations and developing patient database using MS Access. The database improved reporting functions and tracked patient demographics, records, medication, appointments and status."

5. Activities You may include high school, college and community activities.
  ➤ Activities demonstrating job related skills (leadership, organizational, communication) may need brief descriptions.
  ➤ If you were involved in many activities they could also be listed like the example below:
    o Activities
      ▪ President, Senior Class   ▪ Editor, Class Newspaper
      ▪ Chairperson, Senior Prom   ▪ Intramural Basketball and Volleyball
      ▪ Debate Club

6. Community Service/Volunteer
  ➤ List, and or describe activities.

7. Computer Skills
  ➤ List hardware, software and programs for which you have proficiency and will be required in the workplace.

> **Highlight Campus Involvement & Community Service**
>
> ❖   Your military background consists of many experiences that an employer will find attractive. You will also want to be sure to highlight non-military experiences such as campus involvement or community service. The combination of experiences will allow you to present yourself as a well-rounded individual bringing value to the position

ADDITIONAL POINTS

1. **Keep in Mind: One Page Limit**
   - ❖ It is so common to see military resumes span five pages or longer. A resume that long will not be read by a prospective employer. **Your resume should be limited to one page.** As you make the decision about which information to include, ask yourself, "Will a hiring manager care about this experience?" Only include information that will help you obtain an interview.

2. **If You Were In Active Combat, Do Not Specify Details**
   - ❖ Defending your country is among the most admirable pursuits, but the truth is actual references to the horrors of combat leave many employers squeamish. While you might have worked in a short-range air defense engagement zone, this experience might not relate to your future goal. Tone down or remove references to the battlefield.

3. An effective resume will be one that you write yourself. Professional resumes are easily spotted by personnel directors. You want to be able to easily discuss your resume content with potential employers. You must feel comfortable with the terminology and know what you mean by the written content of the resume.

4. Use action words as the first word of a sentence whenever possible.

5. If you have a multiple page resume, put your name on the top of each page.

6. Do not use "etc." or other abbreviations.

7. Don't give references or state your supervisor's name on your resume.

8. Don't lie or exaggerate.

9. Make sure your resume is perfect, error-free, and neat. It should have visual appeal and not be crammed.

10. You want it balanced on the page with even margins.

11. After you have written your resume into a final typed draft and before you submit or post it, have it proofread by friends, family and people in the field.

12. Emphasize the positive. Omit negatives like being fired or a low GPA.

13. Don't use a template. They make it difficult to rearrange information and lock you into a particular style. Templates will also change formatting if the reader has a different version of MSWord. If you have access to a .pdf writer, convert your resume to .pdf format before submitting it.

14. Make an appointment with career services to have your resume critiqued.

PRINTING/HIGHLIGHTING

1. Leave about a one inch margin on all sides.
2. Use capital letters, underlining, bold print and indenting to emphasize important information. Do not, however, use more than two or three indentations. Do not use multiple font types.
3. Keep paragraphs short (single spaced descriptions) and double or triple space between headings.
4. Use high quality white, off-white, beige or gray paper with matching envelopes.
5. Have copies made by a professional printing company, or make your own computer copies on a quality printer.

COVER LETTERS

1. The purpose of a cover letter is to get the potential employer to read your resume and to invite you for an interview. The cover letter will not only expand on some of the information in your resume, it will give you an opportunity to let the employer know more about you and why you are the best candidate for the job.
2. Type a different cover letter for every resume you send.
3. The cover letter should be one page, generally three or four paragraphs.
4. Use 8 ½ X 11 paper, the same heavy bond paper as your resume.
5. Address each letter to a particular person. If you don't know the person's name, research the company on line or make a phone call and find out who the hiring manager is. Cover letters should accompany email resumes as well.
6. Write the word "enclosures" at the bottom of the email to indicate a resume is enclosed.
7. **See our Cover Letter Packet for more information and guidance.**

For More Information

Contact the Career Services Office located on the first floor of Trinity East Hall and/or email careerservices@annamaria.edu with any questions or concerns. The Career Services website is www.annamaria.edu/resources/career-services

ANDREW MARIO SMITH
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amsmith@comcast.com

QUALIFICATIONS

- Proven leader with over 25 years of progressively successful experience in administrative and management positions in the military.

EDUCATION/TRAINING

- B.S. Business Administration. University of Tennessee   1995
- Army Command and General Staff College.   2005
    - Course emphasis placed on organization theory, personnel management and international issues.
- Air Force Command and Staff College.   2006
    - Emphasis placed on senior level management and personnel administration.
    - Extensive technical in-service training with emphasis on administrative functions, human resources management and Equal Opportunity Programs.

RELATED EXPERIENCE

- Responsible for managing personnel, fiscal and material resources required to operate administrative support centers serving employees located in the United States and Japan.
- Led staff of employees responsible for Secretary of Defense.
- Directed specialized public affairs activities and connection with congressional staffers.
- Managed the daily operations of a Human Resource office responsible for providing all phases of personnel service support to 1500 employees located throughout Maryland, Virginia and metropolitan Washington, D.C

EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

2011-2014: CAE of Canada
1995-2011: Department of Army

CAMPUS ACTIVITIES

- President, Business Administration Club
- Vice President, Community Service Organization

<u>COMPUTER SKILLS</u> Adobe Photoshop