

# RÉSUMÉ & COVER LETTER GUIDE

**By -**

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## CREATING A STRONG RÉSUMÉ...

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**A Résumé** should be considered as a marketing tool to quickly show employers the **skills, experiences, and qualities** that demonstrate that you are a **fit** for the job and the company. It is always a good practice to tailor your résumé based on the position you are seeking.

Note: It takes employers 6 seconds to review a résumé.

### RÉSUMÉ TIPS:

#### ❖ Résumé language

- Specific and not general
- Active and not passive
- Written to express and not impress
- Fact based (quantify & qualify)
- Quickly scan able

#### ❖ Résumé mistakes to avoid

- Spelling and grammar errors
- Improper formatting
- Use of passive language Not well organized or easy to scan
- Too wordy and long

#### ❖ Résumé Formatting

- One page only; If you decide to have a 2 pager résumé, ensure that the most important information in on the first page
- Length: One page (A4 size)
- Fonts: Times New Roman, Calibri, Verdana or Arial (Keep the font style consistent across the résumé and cover letter)
- Font Size:
  - Depending on the amount of content use 10-12 font size throughout the résumé
  - Your name can be in bigger font size
- Bullets: Use only solid bullet instead of paragraphs as it is easier to scan through bullets which are short and descriptive
- Margins:
  - Top and Bottom may range from 0.5" to 1"
  - Left and Right should be same size between 0.75" to 1"
- Bold, Underline or Capitalize: Using bold, underline and capitals can emphasis important points, however you should avoid over-use. Examples where you can bold, underline or capitalize:
  - **EDUCATION , EXPERIENCE**
  - Bachelor of Science in Accounting
  - Marketing Intern



#### ❖ Other Tips

- Share PDF version with employers to avoid formatting issues in the printable version
- The file name of your résumé should have your name e.g. "Allen White Resume.pdf"
- Formatting should be in line with the industry where you are seeking a job, some industries prefer colors and designs in résumé and some do not
- When you are in doubt, keep your résumé simple, clear and easy to read

## SECTIONS OF RÉSUMÉ:

#### ❖ Name & Contact

- Your full name should be at the top center of the résumé; Font size for name can be bigger than rest of the résumé
- Your name should be followed by your street address, contact number, email id and link of your LinkedIn profile; you may however, skip your full address and mention just the City, State and Zip
- Example:

**ALLEN C. WHITE**

2101 California Street, Mountain View, CA 94040 | 650.123.1234  
[www.linkedin.com/in/allenwhite](http://www.linkedin.com/in/allenwhite) | [awhite@mail.sfsu.edu](mailto:awhite@mail.sfsu.edu)

#### ❖ Highlights

This section comes at the top of the résumé (after the name, address and contact details) and can be treated like a summary, however you may keep it or skip it depending on the rest of the content in your résumé. This section will show qualifications or experience in your background that the employer should pay attention to. **Ideas for information that can be added:**

- **Number of years of experience** in a field or fields
- What are your **strengths**? In what situations do these strengths shine? Try not to be too general
- What are your **interests**? If so, mention them if they relate to the job
- Were you **recognized or awarded** for your work?
- How did you **impact** your school, work, or community?
- What **technical skills** can you offer? Don't forget social media if it applies to your industry
- Are you **multilingual**?
- **Examples of highlights:**



- Passionate about creating an engaging user experience
- Possess 5 years of experience providing excellent customer service in the retail and hospitality industries
- Strategic thinker with the ability to efficiently plan projects that best meet customer needs
- Proficient in Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and Access
- Ability to engage customers through Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Snapchat
- Fluent in Spanish and English

#### ❖ Education

- Mention the course, major/specialization and university
- Mention the GPA if it's higher than 3.0
- You may add coursework (4-6 courses) or projects (highlights) you have completed or working on which are relevant to the job you are seeking; this can demonstrate relevant knowledge and skills
- Example of education and coursework:

##### **Master of Business Administration, Accounting**

**Expected May 2019**

San Francisco State University, San Francisco, California (GPA: 3.86)

Relevant Coursework: Strategic Management Accounting, Cost Accounting, Federal Tax

##### **Bachelor of Science, Business & Accounting Option**

**May 2017**

San Francisco State University, San Francisco, California (GPA: 3.68)

- Example of relevant project:

##### **Relevant Projects**

ABC Business Analysis Project

- Collaborated with a team of 4 to develop an expansion plan for a small business
- Interviewed business owner and staff to gather insights on business operations and conducted a SWOT analysis
- Developed expansion recommendations for ABC company
- Created a report and presented findings and suggestions to the business staff



### ❖ Experience

- Include paid, unpaid, volunteer or even student leadership experience to demonstrate skills and knowledge
- Develop effective bullet points that quantify that work you did; You may use the below formula:
  - Action word + What you did? + How or Why? + Number/Percentage showing impact  
(Note: List of Action words in given below)
- Dates should be on the right side for the Applicant Tracking System to trace it
- Example:

#### **ABC Business, San Francisco, CA**

**09/2015-Present**

##### Customer Service Representative

- Assisted 50-100 customers daily through in-person, phone, email, and social media interactions
- Recognized for excellence in customer service through customer feedback
- Developed a project to engage customers through social media with over 2,000 followers across platforms in the first 6 months

### ❖ Affiliations & Awards

- Include your involvement in organizations on or off-campus; this can demonstrate attractive qualities, skills and interest to the employer
- If you have taken up leadership positions in school or at your job, you can add it in the affiliation section to demonstrate leadership skills
- Mention the time period or year of your affiliation with the organization or award
- Example:

#### **AFFILIATIONS**

- Management Organization for Business Students
- SFSU College of Business Fellow

August 2015 - January 2016  
January 2016 - May 2016

#### **HONORS & AWARDS**

- Beta Gamma Sigma, 2015
- Dean's List, 2014-2016



### ❖ Skills & Interests

- You can use this section to highlight your computer skills required for the job
- You can demonstrate interests which can bring you and the interviewer on a common ground to talk about; Do not mention your interest if you cannot answer basic questions about it in an interview as it may not work in your favor
- Example:

#### **SKILLS**

**Computer:** Microsoft Word, Excel, Access, PowerPoint, QuickBooks, Wave

**Interests:** Hiked trails in 5 states of United States, Avid reader of mystery novels, biographies and personal finance books

## ACTION VERBS THAT CAN BE USED IN YOUR RÉSUMÉ:

The action words are useful for phrasing your experience and achievements. These words can drive recruiter's attention to your skills. Here is a list of action words that you may use in your résumé.

### ❖ Accomplishments (most preferred):

achieved	exceeded	resolved (issues)	transformed
completed	improved	restored	operationalized
expanded	reduced (loss)	spearheaded	won

### ❖ Leadership & Management Skills

administered	developed	led	reorganized
analyzed	directed	managed	replaced
appointed	evaluated	motivated	restored
assigned	executed	organized	reviewed
approved	handled	originated	strengthened
attained	headed	oversaw	streamlined
chaired	hosted	planned	supervised
consolidated	increased	prioritized	
coordinated	incorporated	produced	
delegated	initiated	recommended	



❖ **Communication & People Skills**

addressed	described	interpreted	recruited
arbitrated	developed	involved	referred
arranged	directed	joined	reinforced
articulated	drafted	lectured	responded
authored	edited	marketed	specified
collaborated	enlisted	mediated	spoke
communicated	explained	negotiated	suggested
composed	expressed	persuaded	summarized
convinced	formulated	presented	spoke
consulted	furnished	promoted	translated
corresponded	incorporated	publicized	wrote
defined	influenced	reconciled	

❖ **Helping, Guiding or Teaching**

adapted	collaborated	explained	insured
advised	conducted	ensured	intervened
advocated	cooperated	expedited	persuaded
aided	counseled	facilitated	referred
answered	critiqued	guided	stimulated
assessed	educated	helped	supported
clarified	encouraged	informed	trained
coached	evaluated	instructed	volunteered

❖ **Flexibility**

accommodated	altered	converted	improvised
adapted	amended	customized	tailored
adjusted	balanced	grew	

❖ **Financial**

administered	balanced	developed	programmed
allocated	budgeted	estimated	projected
analyzed	calculated	forecasted	reconciled
appraised	computed	managed	reduced
assessed	conserved	measured	researched
audited	determined	planned	retrieved





❖ **Technical**

adapted	devised	operated	solved
assembled	engineered	overhauled	standardized
built	fabricated	programmed	specialized
converted	fortified	refined	upgraded
debugged	installed	remodeled	utilized
designed	maintained	repaired	

❖ **Creativity**

acted	drew	instituted	originated
conceptualized	established	integrated	performed
created	fashioned	introduced	photographed
customized	founded	invented	planned
designed	illustrated	modeled	revitalized
displayed	initiated	modified	shaped

❖ **Research**

analyzed	examined	investigated	summarized
clarified	extracted	monitored	surveyed
collected	identified	organized	systematized
critiqued	inspected	processed	tabulated
diagnosed	interpreted	recorded	validated
evaluated	interviewed	reviewed	



## WRITING A COMPELLING COVER LETTER...

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**A Cover Letter** is used by an employer to see your interest in the job, company, and industry, your potential contributions to the company (interest, skills & experiences) and your writing and communication skills.

### COVER LETTER TIPS:

- ❖ Open your cover letter with a compelling paragraph/statement that catches the reader's attention
- ❖ Always analyze the job description and link your qualifications and experiences with what the employer is looking for
- ❖ It is always a best practice to custom your résumé for every job you apply to
- ❖ Be specific on why you want to work in this role and this company
- ❖ Be clear, concise with no grammar or spelling errors
- ❖ Demonstrate your knowledge about the company
- ❖ Do not over use "I" – "I did...", "I managed to...", "I am excellent at..."

### COVER LETTER OUTLINE:

- ❖ Paragraph 1: Introduction  
This should be a short paragraph which should answer the following questions
  - Which position are you applying to?
  - How did you find out about this opening?
  - Why are you interested in this job, company and industry? (in 1 sentence)
  - What can you offer? (in 1 sentence)
- ❖ Paragraph 2: What do you know? What have you done in past?
  - Highlight specific experiences from the past that demonstrate a skill, relevant in this job
  - You may reiterate relevant aspects of your résumé (education, experience and/or skills)
  - If you can, quantify your achievement in terms of %, dollar or hours
- ❖ Paragraph 3: What can you bring to the company?
  - What can you contribute to the job or the company to meet their goals?
  - Why are you fit for the job?
  - Relate your skills to the job description



- ❖ Paragraph 4: Closing
  - Express your interest in discussing your qualifications and experience and request an interview
  - Thank the employer for consideration

## COVER LETTER FORMATTING:

- ❖ One page only; Shorter the better
- ❖ You may use bullets or spaces to break up information into manageable chunks
- ❖ Use consistent font size and font style across the résumé and cover letter to give it a clean and a consistent look
- ❖ Formatting and style can differ from industry to industry; when you are in doubt, keep your cover letter simple, clear and easy to read
- ❖ Align all the text to the left for a more professional look



## AFTER BUILDING A RÉSUMÉ & COVER LETTER...

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- ❖ Print and Proofread; check for typos, error and formatting
- ❖ Obtain additional feedback from professionals in the company or industry you are targeting
- ❖ Make an in-person, phone or video appointment with Career Services and get feedback

### Contact details:

College of Business Career Services  
Email: [cobcareer@sfsu.edu](mailto:cobcareer@sfsu.edu)  
Room: BUS 137 | Business Building  
Website: <https://cob.sfsu.edu/resources/career-services>

- ❖ Start applying to opportunities on:
  - COB internal job page: <http://cob.sfsu.edu/resources/career-services/opportunities>
  - Handshake: <https://sfsu.joinhandshake.com/login>
  - Indeed: <https://www.indeed.com/>
  - Simply Hired: <https://www.simplyhired.com/>

NOTE: You may utilize the additional resources on the campus-wide Career Services and Leadership Development (CSLD) at <http://careerservices.sfsu.edu/>