Resume and Cover Letter Guide 2021

TMASF Connects has done extensive research to provide updated resume and cover letter formats to assist you in effectively displaying your work, skills, experience, and accomplishments. This guide was developed to help professionals frame their experiences working from home and update their resumes.

Writing your Resume

A well written resume can help catch the attention of recruiters and supervisors and help you stand out from other applicants when applying for a new role or promotion. There are a plethora of formats and templates to help you build and create your resume. According to Indeed, the top resume formats in 2021 are chronological, functional, and combination.

When you are deciding on which format to use, consider what your situation is. Are you a recent graduate with plenty of extra-curricular activities? Are you looking for an internship as a college student? Or do you have a lot of work experience? Make sure to carefully select which resume format fits you the most.

The following chart is a comparison of the top formats with information on when and how they should be utilized:

RESUMES VS. COVER LETTERS

A **resume** is a 1–2-page document where you can demonstrate your skills, education level, and qualifications to employers.

A **cover letter** is an introductory letter where you present more of your personality and desire for a specific career.

	Chronological	Functional	Combination
Purpose	Displays your work history in reverse chronological order, from most recent to least recent	Emphasizes your professional skills and experience	Combines both work history and skills
Benefits	Highlights your newest skills, talents, and qualifications	Presents the most relevant skills and work experience	Advertises a professional image
When to use it	When you want to show a strong career path with past employments	Great for first time job seekers, or employees who are switching career paths/industries	Beneficial for recent graduates or job seekers looking to develop their career
Free Templates	Chronological Templates	Functional Templates	Combination Templates

Writing your Cover Letter

After creating a strong resume, you may need a cover letter that complements it. The intent behind a cover letter is to expand more on the information presented on your resume. You are also introducing more of your personality to the hiring manager and giving insight on the motivation and desire you have for the specific position.

Like a resume, there are a variety of formats for cover letters. Start by selecting the right type of cover letter that will reflect why you are applying for the job. A cover letter allows you to go beyond your resume and may include statistics, relevant skills, and abilities from previous jobs. Glassdoor has a guide on what to include in your cover letter.

Be sure to tailor your cover letter for every position you apply for. Instead of writing a generic cover letter, customize each letter to target the specific position and company you are applying to. Writing your cover letter can be time consuming, but it will reinforce the reasons on why you would be a great fit for the job. Indeed has several Free Cover Letter Templates.

Stand out from the Crowd

With time the job market has progressively gotten more competitive. It can be hard to stand out and get the attention of recruiters and hiring managers even if you have a great resume and cover letter. Here are some tips you can follow to stand out from the crowd and land an interview:

1. **Do Research!**

   Forbes lists their number one tip is to do your research and have sufficient knowledge of the industry, company, and colleagues of the position you are applying for. This will demonstrate to employers you are interested in becoming part of their team.

2. **Enhance your social media presence**

   Make sure your social media posts represent the person you are today. Many companies take the time to look at an applicants' social media during the hiring process. Be sure to delete or archive posts that may be inappropriate and do not reflect the person you are today.

3. **Show the right mindset**

   Show optimism and be yourself. Hiring managers can usually tell when you are being your authentic self or faking an eager attitude, so make sure you have a positive energy and show them you are motivated to work for them.

4. **Demonstrate what you can do for them**

Take the initiative and write a piece of work you can present to them. For example, if you are applying for a Marketing position, write out a marketing plan for them. This will impress them and let them know you are determined to work for them.

5. **Follow Up**

Hiring managers get dozens of emails and job applications every day, so it may take up to two weeks to get a response about your application. If you have not gotten an email or letter back, it is a great idea to write a short cordial message to ask for an update regarding the hiring process.

Resources for College Students and Graduates

Resumes

As a college student one of the best ways to prepare for the workforce is to have a resume. Start by choosing what format fits you, then prioritize your education by emphasizing relevant coursework, skills, and internships. Don't forget to proofread as spelling errors are common. You can also ask your college professors, advisors, and peers to review your resume to make sure that it appears professional and error-free.

Avoid Entry-Level Mistakes

Your resume should be as close to perfect as possible since you will want to stand out to recruiters and make a great first impression with your skills and accomplishments. As an entry level applicant, you might not be an experienced resume writer. It is advised that you outline more about what you have to offer, and include key words from the job description, so you stand out as a great fit. You should also include any type of work experience, whether it was volunteer work, internships, or summer jobs, all extracurricular activities are worth mentioning. College Express details ways to avoid the most common mistakes recent graduates make.

Standing out

As a college student, you might think that you will not stand out as a candidate because you don't have experience. UC Davis mentions that even simple activities such as getting involved on campus, joining clubs or organizations, or doing community service can show employers that you can do more than just academics. These activities not only help you stand out but also enhance your skills and help with professional development.