



THE JOB SEARCH STARTER PACK

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INTRODUCTION

This guide is designed to help you create effective, professional resumes and cover letters that will stand out to potential employers. A well-crafted resume and cover letter are essential tools in your job search, serving as your first opportunity to make a positive impression on hiring managers.

Your resume is a concise summary of your professional experience, skills, and qualifications. It should highlight your most relevant accomplishments and demonstrate the value you can bring to an organization. A strong resume clearly communicates your strengths and helps employers quickly identify your potential fit for a position.

Your cover letter complements your resume by explaining your interest in a specific position and organization. It allows you to expand on key qualifications, connect your experience directly to job requirements, and express enthusiasm for the opportunity. A compelling cover letter can distinguish you from other candidates with similar qualifications.

This guide provides step-by-step instructions for creating both documents, along with samples to help you visualize the final product. Follow these guidelines to develop professional, tailored application materials that effectively showcase your qualifications.

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HOW TO WRITE A RESUME

A resume is a concise, professional document that summarizes your skills, experience, and qualifications. It serves as your introduction to potential employers and should highlight your most relevant accomplishments.

STEP-BY-STEP RESUME WRITING GUIDE

STEP 1: FORMAT YOUR CONTACT INFORMATION

Place at the top of your resume:

- Full name (slightly larger font)
- City, State, ZIP code
- Phone number
- Professional email address
- LinkedIn URL (optional but recommended)

STEP 2: CREATE A PERSONAL BRAND STATEMENT

Write 2-3 sentences that provide a high-level overview of:

- Your professional identity and years of experience
- Key skills and areas of expertise
- Notable achievements or specializations
- Career goals or professional focus

Senior Project Manager

A results-driven operations professional with over 10 years of experience managing cross-functional teams. Passionate about solving problems and improving workflows with a track record of implementing efficient systems that reduce costs and improve productivity.

STEP 3: LIST YOUR KEY SKILLS

Select 5-8 skills most relevant to your target position

Present in a clean, scannable format

Focus on a mix of technical and soft skills

- Align with keywords from job descriptions

Project Management | Budget Oversight | Cross-Functional Leadership | Training & Development | Process Improvement | Strategic Planning

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STEP 4: DETAIL YOUR PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

For each position, include:

- Company name, location, and employment dates
- Job title with dates for each role
- 1-2 sentence job scope describing your role and responsibilities
- 3-5 bullet points highlighting accomplishments (not just duties)

STEP 5: INCLUDE EDUCATION

- Degrees earned (spelled out with acronyms)
- Field of study/major
- Institution name and location
- Omit graduation dates unless recently graduated
- List most recent degree first if you have multiple

STEP 6: ADD ADDITIONAL SECTIONS AS RELEVANT

- Professional development/certifications
- Relevant training programs
- Industry affiliations or memberships
- Special projects, presentations, or publications

RESUME BEST PRACTICES

Keep it concise: Typically 1-2 pages depending on experience level

Use consistent formatting: Same font, alignment, and structure throughout

Tailor to each position: Customize content to match job requirements

Quantify achievements: Use numbers to demonstrate impact

Proofread carefully: Eliminate all errors and typos

Use reverse chronological order: Most recent experience first

Focus on results: Emphasize outcomes rather than responsibilities

Use keywords: Incorporate relevant industry and job-specific terms

Review every bullet: Ensure each one demonstrates value

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SAMPLE OF A RESUME

1

NAME

City, ST zip code | Phone | email address | Customized LinkedIn URL

2

WHAT YOU WANT GOES HERE (Personal Brand)

A **professional summary** is a brief, high-level overview of your skills, experience, and key achievements. It's typically placed at the top of your resume and serves as a quick introduction to who you are as a professional and where you are going as a professional. You may include years of experience, key skills and expertise, major achievements, industry/job specific keywords and/or career goals and value you bring.

3

SKILLS

Key Skill | Key Skill | Key Skill | Key Skill | Key Skill | Key Skill

4

EXPERIENCE

COMPANY, City, ST

Month Year – Month Year

Job Title, Month Year – Month Year

Professional summary specific to your experience at the company. Provide context to the team you worked on, the size of the organization and budget you supported, number of direct and indirect reports, types of projects you led, etc.

List accomplishments here, they can be grouped by professional competency or function

- Accomplishment
- Accomplishment
- Accomplishment
- Accomplishment

Previous Job Title, Month Year – Month Year (This is if you've had multiple roles at THE SAME COMPANY)

- Accomplishment
- Accomplishment
- Accomplishment

COMPANY, City, ST

Month Year – Month Year

Job Title, Month Year – Month Year

Professional summary specific to your experience at the company. Provide context to the team you worked on, the size of the organization and budget you supported, number of direct and indirect reports, types of projects you led, etc.

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4

ADDITIONAL RELEVANT EXPERIENCE

COMPANY, City, ST
Job Title

COMPANY, City, ST
Job Title

5

EDUCATION | TRAINING

Degree, Field of Study
Institution, City, ST

Previous Degree, Field of Study
Institution, City, ST

6

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT | CERTIFICATIONS

Place here any relevant courses or certifications

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Professional Affiliations
Presentations
Patents, Technical Disclosure , etc

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HOW TO WRITE A COVER LETTER

A cover letter is your opportunity to introduce yourself to employers and explain why you're the right fit for a specific position. It complements your resume by highlighting your most relevant qualifications and demonstrating your written communication skills.

STEP-BY-STEP COVER LETTER WRITING GUIDE

STEP 1: FORMAT YOUR CONTACT INFORMATION

Create a professional header that includes:

- Your full name
- City, State, ZIP code
- Phone number
- Professional email address
- LinkedIn URL (optional but recommended)

STEP 2: ADD DATE AND RECIPIENT DETAILS

- Current date
- Recipient's name and title (if known)
- Company name
- Company address

STEP 3: START WITH A PROFESSIONAL GREETING

- If you know the hiring manager's name: "Dear Mr./Ms. [Last Name]:"
- If you don't know their name: "Dear Hiring Manager:" or "Hello,"

STEP 4: CRAFT AN ENGAGING OPENING PARAGRAPH

- Specify the exact position you're applying for
- Briefly introduce your professional background
- Explain why you're excited about the role
- Consider mentioning how you discovered the position

"I came across your posting for the Project Coordinator position at [Company Name] and am excited to share that I am a great fit for the role. My passion for people combined with my interests in technology and project management are foundational to my ability to contribute to matrixed, technical environments."

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STEP 5: DEVELOP STRONG BODY PARAGRAPHS (1-2)

- Focus on your most relevant qualifications for the position
- Match your experience directly to the job requirements
- Include specific accomplishments with measurable results
- Explain how your skills would benefit the company
- Consider using bullet points to highlight key strengths

STEP 6: WRITE A CONFIDENT CLOSING PARAGRAPH

- Reaffirm your interest in the position
- Request a conversation, interview, or next steps
- Express gratitude for their consideration
- Keep it concise and professional

STEP 7: ADD A PROFESSIONAL SIGN-OFF

- Use "Sincerely," "Best regards," or similar closing
- Type your full name
- Add "Enclosure" or "Encl: Resume" to indicate your resume is attached

COVER LETTER BEST PRACTICES

Keep it concise: One page maximum with clear, direct language

Customize each letter: Reference the specific company and position

Show your value: Focus on what you can contribute, not just what you want

Use specific examples: Include numbers and measurable results when possible

Proofread carefully: Eliminate all spelling and grammatical errors

Maintain a professional tone: Be confident but not arrogant

Format consistently: Use the same font and formatting as your resume

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SAMPLE COVER LETTER

1

YOUR NAME

LinkedIn URL | Email | Phone | City, State

2

Date

Attn: Hiring Manager

Company Name

Address

City, State Zip

3

Dear Mr./Ms. [Addressee] (or First Name, if appropriate):

4

I came across your posting for the [JOB TITLE] and am excited to share that I am a great fit for the role. My [key relevant skill/experience] combined with my interests in [relevant industry/field] are foundational to my ability to contribute to [type of environment/industry].

5

I connect with your organization's goals and mission and am confident that I can bring immediate value to your team. My background and experience specifically align with the role in the following areas:

- [Key Strength Area 1] - [Brief description of your skills in this area]. For example, I [specific accomplishment with quantifiable result if possible]. This demonstrates my ability to [relevant skill needed for the position].
- [Key Strength Area 2] - [Brief description of your skills in this area]. In my role at [Previous Company], I [specific accomplishment with quantifiable result if possible]. As a result, I [positive outcome or recognition received].
- [Key Strength Area 3] - [Brief description of your skills in this area]. I consistently [valuable behavior/skill] which enables me to [benefit to potential employer].

6

These highlights demonstrate my capabilities, but there's more to discuss. I am a continuous learner with [mention relevant certification/training], have a strong grasp of [relevant technologies/methodologies], and a proven ability to [key soft skill that's valuable in this role].

I'm confident that my qualifications make me particularly well suited for this role. Can we discuss how I might contribute to your team? I can be reached at [phone number] or [email address]. Thank you for your consideration, and I look forward to connecting with you soon.

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Sincerely,
Your Name

Enclosure