

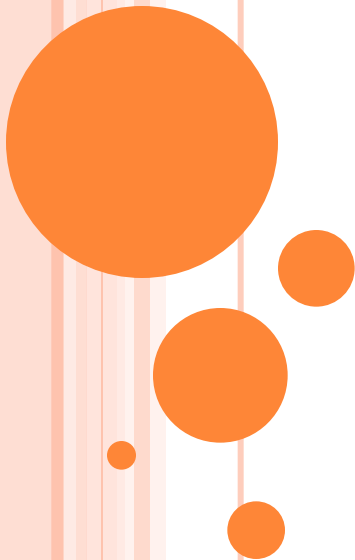
RÉSUMÉ & COVER LETTER WRITING

Kelly Brown: kjbrow01@syr.edu

Tina Press & David Rubin

Career Development Center

313 Newhouse 3



Building Blocks of a Great Résumé

Clarity

Relevance

Consistency ●

“Must Have” Sections of a Résumé

THE BIG THREE

- Experience
 - The “meat” of your résumé
- Skills
 - Make you stand out as a candidate
- Education
 - Notice I didn’t list this one first!



OPTIONAL SECTIONS: Activities, Honors, Awards



The Experience Section



The Experience Section

***NOTE:**

For a communications résumé you do not need to divide this into “related,” “work” or other types of experience.

Keep it to just one section.



The Experience Section

STEP 1

Determine who will be reading your résumé. This will get you in the right mindset to write it and ensure that you are highlighting the right skills and experiences.



The Experience Section

- Who will be reading it?
 - Potential employer
 - Networking contact
 - HR coordinator

- What are they looking for?
 - SKILL SETS
 - EXPERIENCE



The Experience Section

STEP 1

Determine who will be reading your résumé. This will get you in the right mindset to write it and ensure that you are highlighting the right skills and experiences.

STEP 2

Create a word bank, then decide what to include based on whether you can show skills sets being learned/used/implemented – “Baskin Robbins” jobs are ok!



GOAL: Write down EVERYTHING you've ever done – related, unrelated, paid, volunteer, job, internship, activity, on time, multiple times, etc.—so you can assess what you want to include on your résumé. Just make a list—don't try to cram it into a résumé format.

PURPOSE: To have a large list of material to work with. You probably won't use everything but will be able to pick and choose what's most relevant to go on the resume.

SAMPLE:

BOOKSTORE MANAGER

Hired and managed staff
Worked with professors and budget staff
Handled receipts and cash register balance and closing
Managed inventory

SEABREEZE AMUSEMENT PARK

Ran games in game department
Dealt with public
Handled large amounts of cash
Represented park to visitors
Worked with others

UNIVERSITY 100

Gave tours to prospective families at SU
Filled out application and was selected
Talk to groups and one on one
Serve as a resource person
Learn/memorize lots of facts & figures
Use judgment and common sense
Serve as representative of school
Deal with wide variety of people

MARKETING INTERN – Museum of Science and Technology

Update website
Help out at promotional events
Answer questions in person and on phone
Conduct research
Think of creative ways to interest public in MOST
Sit in on meetings
Deal with public and museum personnel

CAMP COUNSELOR

In charge of and responsible for the well-being of 15 eight- to ten-year-olds
Created activities
Communicated with parents and fellow counselors



The Experience Section

STEP 1

Determine who will be reading your résumé. This will get you in the right mindset to write it and ensure that you are highlighting the right skills and experiences.

STEP 2

Create a word bank, then decide what to include based on whether you can show skills sets being learned/used/implemented – “Baskin Robbins” jobs are ok!

STEP 3

Use clear, concise bullets to describe what you were responsible for doing. Don't forget to QUALIFY and QUANTIFY!



Creating Clear, Concise Bullets

- From your word bank, pull out what is most relevant.
 - In addition to the obviously relevant responsibilities, administrative and “grunt” work is actually relevant!
 - Think about what skills each responsibility illustrates.
- For each responsibility, write a phrase (no end punctuation!) that starts with a verb describing what you did.



The Experience Section

- **Reverse Chronological**
 - Traditional, orderly
 - Problem: Your last job may not be the most relevant
- **Functional**
 - Group experiences by skills
 - Problems: You have not had enough relevant experience to form groups
- **Combination**
 - Keeps things organized chronologically but “bumps up” experiences that are more relevant



The “Combination Method”

- List experiences in reverse chronological order.
- Look at the internship/job description to identify what the company is looking for in a candidate.
- “Bump up” the most relevant experiences.
- This will take things out of chronological order, but that’s ok!
- Do the same thing to your bullets: Most relevant first!



The Skills Section



The Skills Section

- **Why is it so important?**
 - In today's tech-savvy communications industry, it culls out your computer, software and equipment aptitude.
 - Highlights traditional communications skills
- **What does this section include?**
 - **Technology:** Basic computer programs like those in Microsoft Office Suite, InDesign; camera equipment
 - **Traditional:** Language skills, writing skills
- **List as much as you can!**



The Skills Section

- Different majors/programs will have different things to add to the skills section:
 - TRF, BDJ, PHO, GRA: camera equipment, editing programs
 - PRL, ADV: databases
 - NOJ, MAG: AP writing style
- It's ok to just list these skills (no need for a phrase like in your experience section bullets).
 - For example:

Skills

- Microsoft Office Suite, Final Cut Pro, Adobe Illustrator, Adobe InDesign
- Fluent Japanese and French, Associated Press writing style
- LexisNexis, MRI+ databases
- Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, WordPress



The Education Section



The Education Section

- For the vast majority of people in the communications field, the education section should go below the experience section!
 - The “Newhouse name” will still be seen
 - Exception: limited experience



The Education Section

- **GET THE NAME OF YOUR SCHOOL RIGHT!**
S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications
- **Do NOT write “expected” or “anticipated” with your graduation date.**



The Education Section

- Single major Newhouse undergraduates receive a B.S.
 - You may write it as:
 - Bachelor of Science
 - B.S.
- Students with dual/double majors may receive a B.A. instead.
 - B.S. vs. B.A. depends on the other college.
 - As with the B.S., you may write “B.A.” or “Bachelor of Arts.”
 - You do NOT get two bachelor’s degrees.



The Education Section

- Study abroad experience
 - Study Abroad: London, England (Spring 2012)
- Dean's List (especially if you don't have an Honors section)
 - Made it all semesters?
 - Made it *almost* all semesters?
- GPA
 - To one decimal point, two at the most.
 - "Chop it." No rounding!



The Education Section

**S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications
Syracuse University**

Bachelor of Science: Public Relations

May 2012

Minor: Spanish

- **Study Abroad: Madrid, Spain (Spring 2011)**
- **Dean's List all semesters**

S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications (Syracuse University)

Bachelor of Science: Television-Radio-Film

May 2012

Minor: Music Industry

Syracuse University

2008-2012

S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications, College of Arts and Sciences

Bachelor of Arts: Magazine, Philosophy

GPA: 3.6, Dean's List (All Semesters)



Optional Additions



- **Experience section**
 - **Course projects as experience**
 - **NOT a laundry list of courses**
 - **Only list projects that are relevant and show skills/knowledge of a process**
 - **Format the same way as an internship**
 - **Student groups involvement as experience**
 - **For some this may be the most relevant content!**
 - **Format the same way as an internship**
- **Additional sections**
 - **Activities**
 - **Includes sororities, student groups, national organizations**
 - **Think about whether they would be better suited to your “Experience” section (remember, “experience” is NOT synonymous with “paid”), especially if you don’t have that much internship or “real world” experience**
 - **Honors or Awards**
 - **Can be combined**
 - **Also can combine with another optional section**
 - **e.g. Honors & Activities**



Order of Sections

For most:

- **Experience**
- **Education**
- **Skills**
- **Honors &/or Activities**



Final Notes on Résumés

DO...

- Remember: **CLARITY, RELEVANCE & CONSISTENCY.**
- Keep it one page.
- Avoid generic, unfocused résumés that list everything you have ever done.
- Make sure it's in a universally readable format.
- Use skill & action words.
- Know your audience!



Final Notes on Résumés

DON'T...

- **Include references or note “references upon request.”
Companies expect that you have these!**
- **Use a template!**
- **Expect the reader to hunt for relevant information– it’s your job to pull it out and make it easy to find.**
- **Be vague or use narrative.**



“NEEDS HELP” SAMPLE

Takes up a lot of room

Jason Amato
123 Fillmore Drive
Port Washington, NY 12345
516-555-5555
hockeypro@aol.com

Can barely see name!

Not usually needed

Objective: My goal is to find a job that will allow me to mix my loves of sports and writing, either at a newspaper or a magazine.

Education: Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY
I will earn my undergraduate degree in May 2008.

No narrative!

Shouldn't be first!

Relevant coursework includes: Introduction to Magazine, News Writing, News Reporting, Introduction to Graphic Arts, Critical Writing, Magazine Editing and Writing.

Port Washington High School, Port Washington, NY
I graduated with honors in June 2005.

No high school!

Employment: Waiter, Applebee's Restaurant 2005
-I took orders and cleared tables. I helped ensure a pleasant dining experience for guests.

More narrative



“Experience” would let you include more than just paid positions

Syracuse University Library 2006
-Work part-time at the front desk. I help check out borrowed materials.

Date?

Intern, Lacrosse Weekly
-Here, I assisted the editorial staff. I also contributed ideas for stories and shadowed reporters on game days. On occasion, I fact-checked articles.

What TYPE of intern?

Honors: -Presidential Scholar -National Honor Society -Student Government Award -SU Dean's List -SU Chancellor's Scholarship winner -Port Washington Student of the Month Award -Key Bank High School Essay Award winner -Italian American Collegiate Legacy Award

Activities: -Habitat for Humanity -National Society of Collegiate Scholars -Daily Orange

Relevant but is lost in this section

Where is the “Skills” section?

Some of this would be better suited in “Education”

“NOW THAT'S MORE LIKE IT” SAMPLE

Jason Amato

123 Fillmore Drive, Port Washington, NY 12345 • 516-555-5555 • jamato@email.com

Experience

EDITORIAL INTERN, Lacrosse Weekly Bethesda, MD Spring 2006
• Conducted research and attended press events for senior editors • Brainstormed and presented story ideas in weekly meetings • Shadowed reports on game days; collected data for reports • Fact-checked articles for accuracy • proofed information with sources

SPORTS WRITER, The Daily Orange Syracuse, NY 2004-Present
• Cover women's tennis and men's hockey team beats • Attend home and regional away games; write two-four stories per week • Regularly interview coaches, players and NCAA officials

SPORTS REPORTER, Magazine Writing Course Syracuse, NY Spring 2006
• Interviewed local professional and college athletes and coaches • Filed one item and feature-length article per week • Conducted background research via Lexis-Nexis and the Internet

Desk Assistant, SU Library Syracuse, NY Fall 2006-Present
• Assisted students with reference and research queries • Instructed visitors in use of database • Checked out materials and processed loans

Waiter, Applebee's Restaurant Port Washington, NY Summer 2005
• Managed team of five • Handled transactions totaling at least \$1000 daily

Skills

• Associated Press Writing Style • LexisNexis • Adobe InDesign, Pagemaker, Illustrator
• Microsoft Excel, PowerPoint, Word • Basic Spanish

Education

S.I. Newhouse School of Journalism Communications, Syracuse University
Bachelor of Science: Magazine Journalism May 2012

Minor in History
• Dean's List
• Chancellor's Scholar

Activities

• National Society of Collegiate Scholars
• Habitat for Humanity

Use Coursework and On-Campus Involvement as Experience

Experience

EDITORIAL INTERN, Lacrosse Weekly Bethesda, MD Spring 2006

- Conducted research and attended press events for senior editors
- Brainstormed and presented story ideas in weekly meetings
- Shadowed reports on game days; collected data for reports
- Fact-checked articles for accuracy ; proofed information with sources

SPORTS WRITER, The Daily Orange Syracuse, NY 2004-Present

- Cover women's tennis and men's hockey team beats
- Attend home and regional away games; write two-four stories per week
- Regularly interview coaches, players and NCAA officials

SPORTS REPORTER, Magazine Writing Course Syracuse, NY Spring 2006

- Interviewed local professional and collegiate athletes and coaches
- Filed one item and feature-length article per week
- Conducted background research via Lexis-Nexis and the Internet

Desk Assistant, SU Library Syracuse, NY Fall 2006-Present

- Assisted students with reference and research queries
- Instructed visitors in use of database
- Checked out materials and processed late fees

Waiter, Applebee's Restaurant Port Washington, NY Summer 2005

- Managed team of five
- Handled transactions totaling at least \$1000 daily



**Any questions
on résumés?**





**The Career Development Center
is here to help you!**

**Career skills seminars
Resume & letter review
Networking advice
Interview prep
Finding an internship
Job hunting assistance**

313 Newhouse 3 | 443-3270 | nhcdc@syr.edu

HOW TO ORGANIZE A RÉSUMÉ

Information must be RELEVANT to the position you are applying for and EASY TO READ.

- 1. DETERMINE YOUR AUDIENCE** Who's going to be reading this résumé? What are you applying for? An internship? A specific job? **In order to make your résumé work effectively for you, you MUST know your audience.** Avoid "generic," unfocused resumes that list everything you've ever done. Don't assume your audience will pull out the relevant information. Networking helps immensely in determining what to include in your résumé.
- 2. CREATE A "WORD BANK."** The word bank is a compilation of all your experiences: paid, unpaid, volunteer, extracurricular, class projects, etc. Write down a brief description of all your duties during this experience. You will not be including everything on your résumé – only relevant information. This is a helpful exercise to determine what you've done.
- 3. SELECT A FORMAT** a. **CHRONOLOGICAL** – Most recent experience first b. **FUNCTIONAL** - Experiences grouped by skills c. **COMBINATION OF BOTH OF THESE FORMATS** – Most students choose the combination method. Examples of these are in the Sample Résumé Binder in the CDC.
- 4. WHAT TO INCLUDE** **EXPERIENCE** – **The most important part of the résumé.** Use shorthand rather than full sentences. Extracurriculars, relevant course projects and unpaid work is still experience. List your most relevant experiences *first* regardless of chronology. • Begin each sentence with an action word. **QUALIFY** experiences: Were you selected from a pool of 100, for example? Convey skill through action words, don't simply list tasks you completed. **QUANTIFY** experiences: How many feature articles did you write? How many people did you supervise?
SKILLS – List **computer** programs, **technical** equipment, **research** skills (Lexis-Nexis) and any **language** skills you have.
EDUCATION – Include **Newhouse degree, year and major(s)** – keep it simple as it won't be your most compelling selling point. If you're a job hunter and have some strong experience (professional or some good internships), education is best listed at the bottom of the resume.
- 5. OPTIONAL ITEMS** **SUMMARY** – At the top of your resume. MUCH more effective than a vague objective. Summaries or highlights **specific** skills, experiences or qualities you have for the reader. A very effective tool for those with little experience. **G.P.A.** – It is extremely rare for the communications industry to hire based on G.P.A.. If over 3.5 include it, if not, omit. It's even less important at the graduate level.
ACTIVITIES/INTERESTS – Non-career related activities can be a helpful résumé addition **IF** you have the room. Remember – some activities may qualify as relevant experience!
- 6. Don't waste your space with...** **OBJECTIVE** – Usually trite and vague such as "a position in tv/film that will allow me to use my skills." Gives the reader NO idea what you want to do. A **SUMMARY** is better.
"REFERENCES AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST" – Ted Bundy had references, which goes to show that *ANYONE* can get a reference. Don't bother with this tired, overused line. Besides, it is assumed that you have references. To note this is redundant.

Résumé Do's and Don'ts

DO.....

- **Keep it ONE PAGE.** The rule is one page equals 10 years or less experience; two pages equals 10+ years experience; etc. Multiple page résumés indicate a lack of understanding of the position – the “here’s everything I’ve done, YOU figure out what’s important” approach. Ninety percent of multiple-page résumés are a result of graphic problems – don’t skip unnecessary spaces or lines; don’t under-utilize margins; keep font size reasonable; don’t put ONE item per line.
- **Keep information RELEVANT to the position you’re applying for.** If you want to write news, put writing experience front and center. If you want to convey reliability or responsibility, make sure you include that part-time job you’ve had since high school. The reader should view your résumé and say to him/herself, “This makes sense – he/she can do this work.” If the experience is old or does not use skills necessary for the position, relegate it to the bottom or to a sentence or eliminate it all together.
- **Use bold face, capitals and bullet points for emphasis.** Underlining is too busy, *italics* fade away and indenting is downright confusing. Keep graphics simple. Keep the resume easy to read.
- **Start each descriptive phrase with a verb to emphasize skill.**
- **Use activities and/or class projects** to support experience. Sometimes these are your most relevant experiences.
- **Keep the space ratio in mind.** Dedicate the most space to relevant information, least space to least relevant. In other words, if your name, address and education take up half your résumé, you need to rethink the space ratio.
- **Remember that a positive attitude and willingness to learn are as important as relevant experience to most employers.**

DON'T.....

- **Expect the reader to hunt for relevant information in your résumé.** It’s *your* job to pull it out and make it easy to find and read.
- **Expect the reader to know what you actually did when you use vague terms** such as “assisted” or “worked with.” Be as descriptive as possible to represent the skills you have or have used.
- **Use narrative to describe your experience.** Stick to short, incomplete sentences. It keeps the readers attention better.
- **Hang on to the past.** By the time you’re a senior, the high school information should be LONG gone (unless you won a Pulitzer in junior high or did something truly shocking).
- **Include information** such as health or marital status, country of birth, etc. It’s illegal for companies to inquire about that so best not to offer it!
- **Overestimate the value of a college degree.** Most people today have a bachelor’s degree. It’s your *experience* that discerns you from others. This goes for master’s degrees as well. Sell experience first, education second. This is best done with your education at the bottom of your resume, experience at the top.

CREATING A WORD BANK

GOAL: Write down EVERYTHING you've ever done – related, unrelated, paid, volunteer, job, internship, activity, on time, multiple times, etc.—so you can assess what you want to include on your résumé. Just make a list—don't try to cram it into a résumé format.

PURPOSE: To have a large list of material to work with. You probably won't use everything but will be able to pick and choose what's most relevant to go on the résumé.

SAMPLE:

BOOKSTORE MANAGER

Hired and managed staff

Worked with professors and budget staff

Handled receipts and cash register balance and closing

Managed inventory

SEABREEZE AMUSEMENT PARK

Ran games in game department

Dealt with public

Handled large amounts of cash

Represented park to visitors

Worked with others

UNIVERSITY 100

Gave tours to prospective families at SU

Filled out application and was selected

Talk to groups and one on one

Serve as a resource person

Learn/memorize lots of facts & figures

Use judgment and common sense

Serve as representative of school

Deal with wide variety of people

MARKETING INTERN – Museum of Science and Technology

Update website

Help out at promotional events

Answer questions in person and on phone

Conduct research

Think of creative ways to interest public in MOST

Sit in on meetings

Deal with public and museum personnel

CAMP COUNSELOR

In charge of and responsible for the well-being of 15 eight- to ten-year-olds

Created activities

Communicated with parents and fellow counselors

“NEEDS HELP” SAMPLE

Jason Amato
123 Fillmore Drive
Port Washington, NY 12345
516-555-5555
hockeypro@aol.com

- Objective:** My goal is to find a job that will allow me to mix my loves of sports and writing, either at a newspaper or a magazine.
- Education:** Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY
I will earn my undergraduate degree in May 2008.
- Relevant coursework includes: Introduction to Magazine, News Writing, News Reporting, Introduction to Graphic Arts, Critical Writing, Magazine Editing and Writing.
- Port Washington High School, Port Washington, NY
I graduated with honors in June 2005.
- Employment:** Waiter, Applebee’s Restaurant 2005
-I took orders and cleared tables. I helped ensure a pleasant dining experience for guests.
- Syracuse University Library 2006
-Work part-time at the front desk. I help check out borrowed materials.
- Intern, Lacrosse Weekly
-Here, I assisted the editorial staff. I also contributed ideas for stories and shadowed reporters on game days. On occasion, I fact-checked articles.
- Honors:** -Presidential Scholar -National Honor Society -Student Government Award -SU Dean’s List -SU Chancellor’s Scholarship winner -Port Washington Student of the Month Award –Key Bank High School Essay Award winner –Italian American Collegiate Legacy Award
- Activities:** -Habitat for Humanity -National Society of Collegiate Scholars -Daily Orange

“NOW THAT’S MORE LIKE IT” SAMPLE

Jason Amato

123 Fillmore Drive, Port Washington, NY 12345 • 516-555-5555 • jamato@email.com

Experience

EDITORIAL INTERN, Lacrosse Weekly Bethesda, MD Spring 2006
● Conducted research and attended press events for senior editors ● Brainstormed and presented story ideas in weekly meetings ● Shadowed reports on game days; collected data for reports ● Fact-checked articles for accuracy ; proofed information with sources

SPORTS WRITER, The Daily Orange Syracuse, NY 2004-Present
● Cover women’s tennis and men’s hockey team beats ● Attend home and regional away games; write two-four stories per week ● Regularly interview coaches, players and NCAA officials

SPORTS REPORTER, Magazine Writing Course Syracuse, NY Spring 2006
● Interviewed local professional and collegiate athletes and coaches ● Filed one item and feature-length article per week ● Conducted background research via Lexis-Nexis and the Internet

Desk Assistant, SU Library Syracuse, NY Fall 2006-Present
● Assisted students with reference and research queries ● Instructed visitors in use of database ● Checked out materials and processed late fees

Waiter, Applebee’s Restaurant Port Washington, NY Summer 2005
● Managed team of five ● Handled transactions totaling at least \$1000 daily

Skills

- Associated Press Writing Style ● LexisNexis ● Adobe InDesign, Pagemaker, Illustrator
- Microsoft Excel, PowerPoint, Word ● Basic Spanish

Education

S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications, Syracuse University
Bachelor of Science: Magazine Journalism May 2012
Minor: History
● Dean’s List
● Chancellor’s Scholar

Activites

- National Society of Collegiate Scholars
- Habitat for Humanity

Reasons Why the Second Résumé “Works”

HEADER

- Uses font that is different than body copy (creates more striking visual presence)
- Runs contact information across the page, saving space
- Includes a more professional email address

FORMAT

- Orders sections in terms of what an employer will likely be concerned with first (hands-on experience over degree, for example)
- Bolds and caps draw attention to entries, allowing even a reader who’s just scanning to get a snapshot of the individual’s qualifications
- Uses bullet points to create visual breaks and highlight each detail
- Runs bullet points across the page to save space
- Headers are consistent from entry to entry (organization/co., title, location, stint)

EXPERIENCE ENTRIES

- Orders entries in terms of relevance to employer instead of chronology
- Gives details about those experiences that are most relevant to the employer; Gives less detail to those experiences that might be less relevant
- Digs out experiences, such as the D.O., that are buried on version one and adds much needed detail
- Adds the most relevant course project as an “experience” entry instead of listing relevant courses taken
- Cuts the objective, which will be made obvious in the cover letter
- Cuts high school material completely

EXPERIENCE DETAILS

- Uses fragments and an active voice, instead of narrative
- Qualifies and quantifies experiences explains tasks and responsibilities clearly so there is no room for interpretation
- Organizes order of details by relevance to employer
- Explains facets of experiences that are either of value to employer of that show sense of character/ethic (Applebee’s entry, for example, displays trustworthiness and leadership skills)

EDUCATION / HONORS / SKILLS

- Lists education clearly and concisely
- Included relevant academic honors under “education” and cuts non-collegiate awards to save from having to include an “honors” section
- Adds a “skills” section to clearly outline other selling points that may be of interest/relevance to the employer’s needs