

Session Objectives:

- Formulating career plans
- Planning your résumé
- Structuring the résumé
- Content of résumé
- Electronic résumés

Formulating career plans

Effective job search entails careful career planning. This includes self analysis, career analysis and job analysis.

Self analysis: Self analysis helps one to identify his/her strengths and weaknesses, interests as well as achievements. It also helps a person identify the areas that require improvement. Thus, self analysis helps one understand himself better. Unless a person is aware of his capabilities and shortcomings, he may not be able to attain his desired goals.

Career analysis: A person would be able to make a good career analysis by making a few queries about the career he is planning to choose and obtaining answers to these queries. A few examples of the questions that help in career analysis are:

- Which are the aptitudes that would be most beneficial for the occupation?
- Does the occupation have any associated health hazards?
- What are the academic and professional requirements?
- What are the future trends likely in the field?
- What benefits and intangible rewards can be expected in the occupation?

Job analysis: Before taking up a new job, it is advisable to do some research about the job and to interact with people who are doing the same or similar kind of work. A job analysis is essential to understand what duties and responsibilities a particular job involves. Job analysis is generally done by fresh graduates who are looking for entry level positions.

Some of the questions that need to be answered while doing a job analysis are:

- Are my academic qualifications and credentials suited for the job?
- What are the duties and responsibilities associated with the job?
- Are the duties and responsibilities compatible with my personal characteristics, aptitude and interests?

Matching personal needs with job profile

Having collected all the information about the job, it is essential to match your interests, qualifications and strengths with the company's requirements. This activity helps you to determine whether your personal needs match the job profile. It is not always possible to find a job that satisfies all your requirements. Therefore, personal requirements need to be prioritized and one should then decide on the best choice.

Example: A software professional who has specialized in networking cannot opt for performing the job of a database administrator. The academic qualifications of the professional does not match the job profile.

Planning your résumé

Résumé writing requires special skill. Its main purpose is to catch the attention of the potential employer. It also tries to communicate why you are the best choice for the job. Employers generally receive hundreds of résumés for each job. To create a good first impression, and to succeed in getting the interview call, the résumé should stand out from the rest. Before beginning to write a résumé, the information that needs to be included in the résumé has to be decided. Careful planning of the résumé enhances one's chances of receiving an interview call.

Structuring the résumé

The résumé should include information that is relevant to the potential employer and exclude all other irrelevant details. The résumé should lay emphasis on the applicant's compatibility with the job requirements.

3 distinct ways in which résumés can be organized are according to the chronological order, functional order, or a combination of the two.

Chronological résumé

This is the most common kind of résumé. This includes details about educational qualifications and employment history of the individual presented in a 'reverse sequential order'.

Functional résumé

Functional résumé emphasizes the skills and accomplishments of the individual. Academic qualifications and professional experience are given a subordinate position in this type of résumé. This type of résumé is more suited for people who are newly entering the job market since it focuses on the individual's areas of competence.

Combination of chronological and functional résumé

This type of résumé is a combination of chronological and functional résumé. It includes the details regarding educational qualifications and experience given in a chronological order. This is followed by a reference to various skills and interests mentioned under separate headings.

Content of the résumé

A résumé should consist of the following sections:

Heading: This section of the résumé contains the applicant's name, address, telephone number, email and fax number.

Example: Mr. Raj
C-1 Surya Square,
Panjagutta,
Hyderabad – 500 082
Phone: 040-6661901
Fax: 040-6785430
E-mail: fhdfd@rediff.com

Career goal or objectives: This part of the résumé reflects the career aspirations of the individual. It allows the prospective employer to ascertain whether the job being sought by the applicant and the one being offered by the company match with each other or not.

Example: Opportunities exist in a progressive software organization. You are an applicant with skills in both software and management. You are ideally placed to become a part of this organization and contribute effectively to its growth.

Education: This section of the résumé provides information about the educational qualifications of the individual. The information is presented in a reverse chronological order. This section of the résumé also provides details about special skills and abilities of the individual.

Work experience: This section of the résumé provides information on the employment history of the applicant. The details generally include the job title, major responsibilities held, name of employer, duration of employment and significant accomplishments, if any. It is advisable to exclude the obvious duties that can be inferred from the job title.

Summary of job skills:

This section typically includes the accomplishments and core competencies of the applicant and give him an edge over other applicants. This section of the résumé should be adapted according to the needs of each organization.

Activities, honors and achievements: This section provides information about the activities, honors, awards, memberships held by the individual. By highlighting the non-academic skills and extra-curricular activities of the individual, this section allows the prospective employer to assess the applicant's leadership qualities and the ability to work with others. It also reflects the leadership skills of the individual. This information can be presented in two formats, by date or by title.

Special interests: Special interests reflect the type of person you are. It is essential that the information provided by the applicant pertaining to his interests and hobbies is legitimate since these form the basis for some of the questions asked during the interview.

Example: If you are interested in yoga, aerobics and the like, you will be perceived as a health conscious person.

References: References are no longer common. Some résumés, however, state that references will be

provided on request. References wherever provided must include details such as the name, address and designation of the person. Prior to giving someone's name as reference, it is necessary to obtain their permission.

Example: Your previous employer or Principal of the college where you studied last could be mentioned as references.

Electronic résumés

The use of electronic résumés is on the rise. Electronic résumés differ from the traditional résumés on the following aspects:

- Traditional résumés use action verbs while electronic résumés use nouns.
- Electronic résumés are scanned before being saved in the database. The font type and font style is different from that used in traditional résumés to facilitate effective scanning.
- Electronic résumés are identified on the basis of key words. A list of key words is therefore provided at the beginning of the résumé to allow scanning softwares to easily identify the résumé.

Summary

Career planning involves self analysis, career analysis and job analysis. A well structured resume plays a crucial role in ensuring the success of a candidate in an interview for a job.