

Communication Skills: Lecture No. 16

Module 5

Lecture 4

Résumé



In the previous lectures of this module, you had learnt how to write a job-application letter, a simple cover letter, a bio-data and a CV.

This lecture, the concluding part of this module, is exclusively on various aspects of writing an effective résumé. Now that you know what a bio-data and a CV are, it will be easy to see in

contrast what a résumé is NOT. Hence, I will begin this lecture by telling you what a résumé is not about.

WHAT IS NOT A RÉSUMÉ?

Above all, a résumé is not a bio-data sent to an Indian employer. If an Indian employer particularly insists on a résumé, it will be silly on your part to send a bio-data or a CV. A résumé, though basically is demanded in the US organisations, owing to globalisation, today all multi-national corporations have started preferring résumé over bio-data/CV. Since, culturally résumé has its American imprints, it is important to understand the cultural variation and corresponding expectations when you apply to an American or Americanized company. Cultural ignorance about the differences between a bio-data/CV and a résumé can play havoc and jeopardise any chance to secure an interview call letter.

WHAT IS A RÉSUMÉ?

A résumé is the means by which a prospective employer considers you for a job. If you write a good résumé, it gets you the job. A bad résumé affects you adversely despite your exceptional credentials. A résumé reveals more about you in terms of your writing skills, ability to express ideas clearly, succinctly, with minuteness to details, and sharp career focus.

WHAT IS NOT A RÉSUMÉ?

A résumé conceals as much as it reveals. You must have heard of the saying, “Art lies in concealing art.” You should keep this in mind while drafting your resume because a good résumé is a concise statement of your career and you should hold restraint using your own data. Cultural awareness in knowing what to omit (such as marital status, age, etc.) will help you develop a résumé in ship-shape. It can also help you modify your bio-data/CV.

In this context, understand first that in a résumé is not a shopping list. You do not itemize as in a bio-data. Serial numbers for items serve no purpose here, hence it should be avoided. Similarly, a résumé is not a matrimonial response: do not enclose your photograph unless the employer specifically asks for it. Most of the American employers will not ask you to enclose

the photograph. The only time perhaps that you need to use a photograph is when you apply for visa—which is a different job altogether.

Understand that it is exclusively *your* résumé—not your father’s! In a bio-data, you include your father’s name and even his occupation, but in a résumé, your father’s name and other details about his position are not required. In the US, the employer will select you purely on your credentials not on your father’s abilities.

In like manner, if you are already employed, do not use your company’s letterhead thinking that it will create a good impression. In fact, it can create a negative impression because a résumé sketches personal profile, using company’s name indicates your poor taste and lack of inner conviction about your own self.

Personal details are not required in a résumé. So, you need not mention about your sex, age, religious affinity, marital status, and other vital statistics as your height, weight, hair color, skin color, and moles on your body. In fact, a prospective employer is not supposed to ask you these questions, and if asked, you have every right to refuse answering them.

Do not take for granted that your employer in the USA understands your degree. It is your responsibility to make your degree understandable. So when you write something like MCHE, you need to say clearly that it is Masters in Chemical Engineering. Even a simple B. Tech. ought to be expanded within parenthesis as Bachelor of Technology, and wherever possible, you can give the equivalent American degree.

Another confusion that might come to you while writing a résumé is with regard to the use of the title—Sir or Sri? In Indian context, *Shriman*, *Shrimati* are shortened to *Sri.*, *Smt.* However, you should refer people by English titles: Mr., Mrs., or Ms. (if you are not sure of the marital status of the woman). But you should retain *Sri* or *Smt* if it is part of the name of an institute as in *Sri Ramachandra Technological University*.

As far as the paper colour is concerned, use plain white paper. Do not use color paper (yellow, pink, green, etc.) or colour ink for printing. Colours distract and when sent by fax or sent as scanned document, the letters become unclear. You can still highlight the letters by using other options like **bold**, *italics*, underline, or CAPITALS, or even vary the font size.

Avoid using expressions which gives a different sense to an American reader. For instance: don’t say *I passed out in 2014*, say, *I graduated in 2014*. When you “pass out” you faint, you swoon, you fell unconscious!

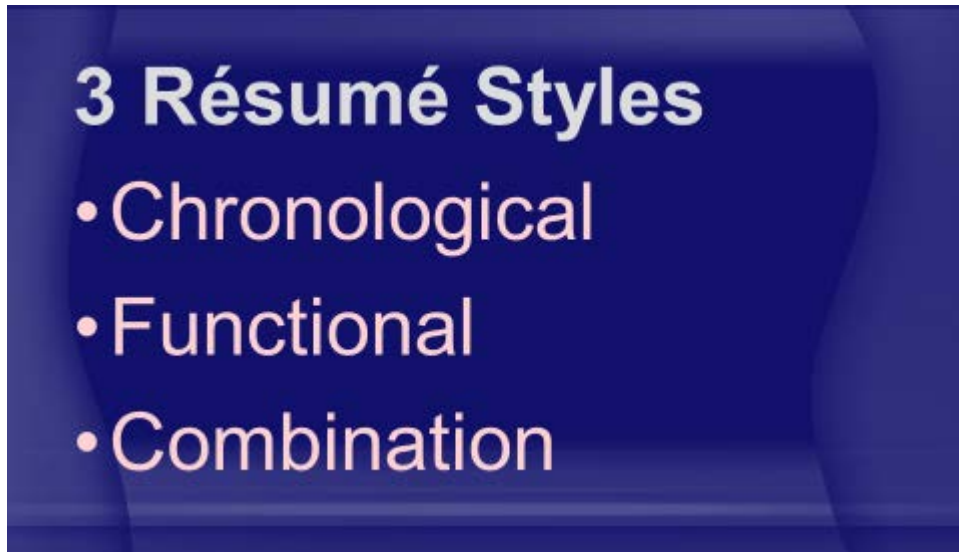
If your name, and those of the referees are long and difficult to pronounce for an American, indicate how it should be pronounced. Even short names like “Paste” and “Hate” need to be indicated as how they should be pronounced as PAA-S-THEY and HA-TEY, otherwise, they will cause misunderstanding.

The most important difference between a bio-data and a résumé is the chronological and reverse chronological order in which you present your data. In a résumé, you present the items in reverse chronological order, that is, you start with the latest first. If Ph. D. is the highest degree you have got, you should start with it, instead of starting with B. Tech.

In a bio-data, you normally use the British form of spelling. For example: programme, colour, centre, etc. In résumé, you should follow American spelling and write as: program, color, center, etc. When you mention the time that you are available for a skype or telephone interview, you should indicate the US time as in: *I will be available at this number Monday to Friday between 7 AM and 9 PM Pacific Time*. Similarly, when you mention any date, use the American format of keeping the month first (August 7, 2014) because when you write in the Indian format 8/7/2014, for an American, it means not July 8 but August 7, 2014!

Finally, do not give the names of your friend or relative for reference, though s/he might be in a high position. In the US, friends, relatives in high positions do not make credible referees. You should give references to those people who know you professionally like your professor, supervisor, principal, and director.

While all the above points will help you to write a good résumé, you need to know which style you will adopt from the following three acceptable styles.



CHRONOLOGICAL RÉSUMÉ

The chronological résumé is the most popular and the conventional one. It lists the work history, but unlike in a bio-data, it starts with the latest one first. The advantage of this style is that the employer can quickly see the educational and experience record. It starts with name, address, telephone/mobile number, job objective, and education. It suits if the candidate has wide experience and steady career growth.

FUNCTIONAL RÉSUMÉ

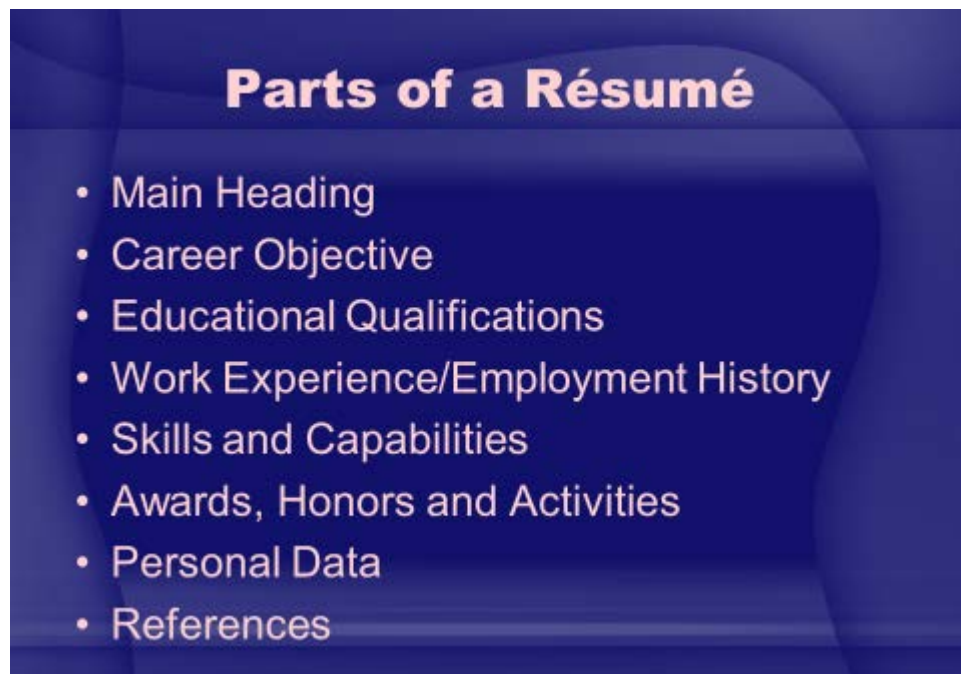
The functional résumé is also called *skill résumé* because it focuses on skills rather than on work experience. If you had break ups in your career, functional résumé suits you. It also starts with name, address, telephone/mobile number, job objective, and education but it substitutes skills for previous jobs. It highlights skills under special categories like communication, managerial, sales, organizational, and marketing. Skills can also be categorized under: *Accomplishments*, *Qualifications*, and *Areas of expertise and Ability*. It is beneficial to starters with no work experience.

COMBINATION RÉSUMÉ

As the name indicates, Combination Résumé *combines* the best features of both chronological résumé and functional résumé. It highlights skills and capabilities but it also includes job history and work experience. It omits objective and keeps open options. And finally, it includes references. It suits if you have a consistently good academic and work record and you want to highlight your skills as well.

PARTS OF A RÉSUMÉ

Now that you are aware of the main features of styles of a résumé, before I conclude this lecture, you should know its parts. The résumé basically contains main heading, career objective, educational qualifications, work experience/employment history, skill and capabilities, award, honors, and activities, personal data and references.



As you start arranging data, make it effective by using action words.

Make it effective by

- Using action words: coordinated, developed, delegated, directed, organized, supervised, collaborated, evaluated, investigated, surveyed, maintained, programmed, solved, adapted, enabled, facilitated, trained, encouraged, appraised, managed, planned, researched, created, designed, established, demonstrated, pioneered, achieved, improved, monitored, streamlined, identified, etc.

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EDUCATION:

Country: Netherlands
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City, State
July 2009 - present

City, State
Aug. 2008 - present

May 2008 – Aug. 2008 City, State

City, State
Jan. 2008 – Feb. 2009City, State
August 2009

Remember

- **Writing your *résumé* is an opportunity to write your future!**

REFERENCES

For further reference . . .

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