



Legal Search & Management, Inc.

We Find the Stars

**Legal Assistants Association
Macomb Community College
Saturday April 14, 2007**

RESUME WRITING

HEADING

- Name, address, telephone (home, work, cell), email address
- Be sure the telephone number on the resume will, without exception, be answered by an adult or an answering machine Monday through Friday 8-5pm. No children, jazz music or dogs barking on your message!
- Do not include the word resume

OBJECTIVE

- An entry level paralegal position in a law firm or corporation that values dedication, quality education and the enthusiasm to increase profitability.

EDUCATION

- Degree, school, date, major and minor areas of study
- GPA if over 3.5
- Awards and achievements
- If no degrees school and class standing
- If in school indicate expected date of graduation
- If degreed include only the school where you received the degree
- Include college prep schools if appropriate
- Include licenses and certificates
- Include your specialized course of study but not necessarily all the courses you have taken

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EXPERIENCE

- Full and part time positions
- Internship
- Title, company/firm, dates, job description
- Do not include address of employer unless out of state, include city and state
- Include city if firm/company has multiple offices
- Do not include your supervisor (cover letter if applicable)
- Do not include the reason you left the job (cover letter if applicable)
- If you are entry level you should list all of your positions
- If you are experienced you can eliminate unrelated positions if you are comfortable with having gaps in your history
- Summarize previous positions, for example: Secretarial positions during college; fourteen years elementary teaching

GAPS IN WORK HISTORY

- It is ok to include an explanation: Childrearing, attended school

ADDITIONAL SKILLS: COMPUTER AND LANGUAGE

- Name the programs you can use
- Do not include versions it clutters up the resume
- Do not oversell your skills. If your Italian is conversational only, state this specifically

ACHIEVEMENTS

- This can be in the experience section or in a separate section
- Quantify your achievements
- Number and size of trials and exhibits
- Number of parties at a closing and dollar amount
- Number of attorneys you work for
- Awards, promotions, superior performance
- What have you contributed that makes you outstanding and recognized?
- Career highlights

VOLUNTEER, MEMBERSHIPS, AFFILIATIONS

- Public speaking and articles
- Charitable organizations. List your contribution and role
- Political and religious affiliations are double edged swords
- Most common mistake: Michigan State Bar Association – State Bar of Michigan, Legal Assistants Section

REFERENCES

- Reference available upon request is not necessary
- Provide on a separate sheet at interview

PERSONAL INTERESTS

- Include if you achieved something: Don't just say you read – say you lead a book club. Don't just say you jog – say you ran a marathon.
- Include it if it pertains to the job you are looking for. If you are applying to Nike your athletic interests are important. If you are applying to an automotive company your racing achievements are applicable

DO NOT INCLUDE

- Personal information: Marital status, race, age, health, social security number
- Salary
- A photograph
- References
- Reasons for leaving a previous job
- Names of supervisors
- The word "Resume" at the top
- Full address, zip code or telephone numbers of former employers
- The word etc. or various

FORMAT, DESIGN, PUNCTUATION, VOICE AND LENGTH

- Leave some space on the page. Crowded resumes are very difficult to read
- Choose not more than two conservative fonts
- Limited underlining and capitalizing, some bold, no italic (especially in an electronic submission)
- Print on one side of the sheet only, on high-quality white or off white bond. Gray doesn't reproduce as well
- Left side justified is easier to read



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- No long paragraphs. Use bullets and short, pithy statements to itemize your job description. Use phrases not sentences
- Leave out extra words: Responsibilities include, possess knowledge of, I was responsible for, in addition too, such as – you can use the colon to list
- As little punctuation as possible
- Do not end statements with a period
- Use active for current and passive for past
- See list of action words
- Never use the first person
- Spell out numbers up to 20; use numerical form for numbers over 21
- Spell out abbreviations unless they are unquestioningly obvious
- Length is subjective. If what you are including is important and to the point you can make it as long as you wish

SUBMISSION

- If email embed in the email and also attach
- Word or wordPerfect

TYPE OF RESUME - DETERMINE PURPOSE

- New job same field
- New job different field
- To keep track of your career experiences

Chronological

- More traditional
- Experience section is the focus
- Used when you are staying in the same profession, in the same type of work
- Easier to understand what you did in each job

Functional

- Highlights major skills and accomplishments
- Places skills up front so reader doesn't have to read each job description to find out what you did
- Good option if targeting a new field. Use skills section to analogize and generalize skills
- Good choice for people with less work experience
- Big disadvantage: Hard to tell what you did where and for how long



Combination

- Includes elements of both the chronological and functional formats
- Skills section includes specifics. Experience section may include specialties only or specific accomplishments
- Prevents repetition if specific work experience is the same at each position