

RESUMES: FROM GOOD TO GREAT

by Ashley Collins, AgCareers.com Education Coordinator

When it comes to developing a resume, the number one thing to remember is the importance of spell check! The second most important thing to remember is that “it is all in the eye of the beholder,” especially when it comes to formatting. Some may want information in a very specific layout while others would like to see your creativity. However, there are some basic fundamentals that should not be ignored.

On average, employers spend less than 20 seconds scanning your resume. If you’ve been asked to e-mail or upload your resume to an online system versus a personal meeting at a career fair, your resume is the first impression you make on the recruiter.

You want to make sure you quickly highlight your best qualities to ensure that your resume lands in the “follow-up” stack of resumes. Below you’ll find some quick tips for developing a great resume. On the following two pages, you’ll find examples of a Good resume and a Great resume, highlighting some of the tips below and ideas for how you can take your resume to the next level.

RESUME TIPS:

- As a university student, your resume should be one page in length but if you’ve been very active and have lots of relevant experiences, it’s acceptable to be one and half to two pages in length.
- As a university student, the majority of the information on your resume should focus on experiences you’ve had while in college — leave high school in the past. Exceptions can be made for major accomplishments such as obtaining your American FFA Degree, **Eagle Scout** or prior work experience with the company.
- While in school, you should list both a permanent and current

address in case you’re applying for a position close to home. This comes into play when applying for internships where housing may not be provided.

- If listing a mobile phone number, tell the recruiter that it is your mobile line and be conscious of your ringtone and voice mail greeting.
- If you use a generic e-mail address like **Yahoo**, **Gmail** or **Hotmail**, list that e-mail to ensure incoming messages from employers aren’t sent to your SPAM or JUNK folder on a school account. If using your school assigned e-mail address, be sure to check those folders routinely for communication from recruiters. Your email system may not identify them as ‘safe senders’ Be sure your e-mail address is professional — this is another opportunity you have to make a good first impression.
- List your major and graduation date, and if you have a GPA 3.0 or better, include that as well.
- If developing a resume for a career fair, you want to have a generic objective statement. If developing a resume to give to a specific employer, tailor your objective statement to match the company and job title. Remember to edit this before sending your resume to a different employer.
- List any professional certifications or association memberships/participation you’ve had.
- Work experiences should be listed in chronological order (most recent followed by experiences that occurred prior).
- Use bullet points to provide easy-to-read examples of your work and be sure to provide quantifiable data for your accomplishments whenever possible.
- Start your bullet points with action verbs to describe what you

did and be sure to watch the tense you use throughout the resume for consistency.

- Be careful about using industry verbiage. You want to demonstrate that you are well-versed in the lingo without using too many acronyms or abbreviations.
- The number of students who participate in study abroad experiences is rapidly growing. Set yourself apart by telling the employer usable detailed information about what you did on your trip and what you learned that can be applied in the business world.
- If you’ve earned scholarships that have significantly aided in deferring the cost of your education, list them under leadership experience or an additional information heading.
- If you’ve held any leadership roles within organizations, provide information about those duties and accomplishments.
- Use an easy-to-read font style and size and review it multiple times for spelling and grammar edits.

Once you’ve got your extraordinary resume ready, save it on your computer as *firstname_lastname_resume.doc* versus *myresume.doc*. This will make it much easier for employers to save your resume in their files and find it easily. Be prepared to e-mail your resume, or upload it to company databases or job boards. Be sure to keep a list of where you’ve uploaded your resume and update these resumes frequently. Take extra copies with you to any interviews you may have, especially if you’ve updated the document, which you should do regularly!

Now that you’ve got the basics down, take a look at the two examples on the following pages and take your resume from good to great.

(more on page 8)

GOOD RESUME

Permanent Address

444 Home Drive
Everywhere, USA 44444
(555) 555-5555

Current Address

555 Career Ready Lane
Anywhere, USA 55555
readytowork@allstar.edu

Objective:

I want to obtain a career in the agricultural industry where I can utilize my agribusiness degree along with my interpersonal and self-starter skills.

Education:

Bachelor of Science in Ag Business Management
Plant Science Minor
University of All-Stars; Big City, USA

Anticipated Graduation:
May 2012
GPA: 3.0/4.0

Professional Experience:

GrowBig Seed

Sales and Marketing Intern; Wichita, IA

05-2009/ 09-2009

- Developed new seed distribution program for individual territory
- Managed 50 plots for quality and growth
- Communicated with 13 dealers about needs and concerns
- Assisted Account Leaders
- Attended grower meetings
- Worked with marketing specialist

Greenhand Ranch

Landscape Manager; Columbia, MO

09-2009/05-2010

- Supervised 20 high school employees
- Created landscape design for farm entrance using over 700 plants
- Planted and cared for over 25 cultivars of fruit trees
- Made external plant purchases
- Maintained plants within ranch showroom

Farms Today

Horticultural Columnist; Nashville, TN

05-2008/08-2008

- Designed layout for Horticultural section of *Farms Today*
- Wrote two articles a week advising homeowners on proper plant care
- Met with five homeowners per week for plant care classes
- Developed company social media page

Leadership Experience

Alpha Zeta, Agricultural Honor Fraternity
Collegiate Farm Bureau – President 2009
University Horticultural Club Study aboard Trip to New Zealand
County Leadership Scholarship Recipient
National FFA Organization American Degree Recipient

01-2009 – Present
01-2008 – Present
01-2009
08-2008
10- 2008

GREAT RESUME

Permanent Address

444 Home Drive
Everywhere, USA 44444
(555) 555-5555 (mobile)

Current Address

555 Career Ready Lane
Anywhere, USA 55555
readytowork@genericemail.com

OBJECTIVE To obtain a career within the agribusiness industry that will utilize my education and experience in building relationships, interpersonal skills and self-starter attitude.

EDUCATION **UNIVERSITY OF ALL-STARS; Big City, USA**
Bachelors in Agricultural Business Management Anticipated Graduation May 2012
• Minor: Plant Science GPA: 3.0/4.0

RELEVANT EXPERIENCE **LANDSCAPE MANAGER**
Greenhand Ranch • Columbia, Missouri (August 2009 – May 2010)
• Supervised 20 high school employees to ensure proper greenhouse management
• Created landscape design for farm entrance using over 700 plants
• Planted and cared for over 25 cultivars of fruit trees
• Negotiated vendor pricing for external plant purchases
• Coordinated layout and design of plants within ranch showroom

SALES AND MARKETING INTERN
GrowBig Seed • Wichita, Iowa (May 2009 – August 2009)
• Developed new seed distribution program for individual territory of six counties
• Managed 50 plots for quality and growth
• Communicated with 12 dealers about needs and concerns
• Assisted Account Leaders with projects to ensure customer expectations were met
• Represented company as an intern at local grower meetings
• Coordinated new project designs with marketing specialist

HORTICULTURAL COLUMNIST
Farms Today • Nashville, Tennessee (May 2008 – August 2008)
• Designed layout for horticultural section in *Farms Today* magazine with 2,000 subscribers
• Wrote two articles a week advising homeowners on proper plant care
• Met with five homeowners per week to instruct plant care classes
• Developed, implemented and maintained *Farms Today* social media advertising plan for Facebook

UNIVERSITY HORTICULTURE CLUB STUDY ABROAD
Dunedin and Auckland, New Zealand (January 2009)
• Researched and reported on greenhouse production practices in New Zealand compared to United States
• Studied with a group of multinational students from diverse countries including Brazil, USA, Mexico, Holland, Egypt, Venezuela, and France
• Interacted with business executives from leading New Zealand companies such as Turners & Growers Ltd, Pukekohe Growers Supplies Ltd and Elders Limited

LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE **Alpha Zeta, Agricultural Honor Fraternity** **January 2009 – Present**

Collegiate Farm Bureau **January 2008 – Present**
President (2009)
• Implemented an Ag in the Classroom program at six schools
• Collaborated with six officers to develop yearly program of activities
• Increased membership by 15 new members

County Leadership Scholarship Recipient **August 2008**
• Received academic and leadership scholarship which funded 80% of tuition cost

National FFA Organization American Degree Recipient **October 2008**