**Purposes of the Resume**

1. Your resume is a summary: it is a history of who you are professionally, where you have been, and where you are planning to go.
2. Your resume helps you define yourself professionally: it allows you to focus on a specific objective an explain how your past experience and education support that objective.
3. Your resume provides a brief introduction to the interviewer and prospective employer.
4. Your resume can serve as a guide for you to review before an interview in order to help you express yourself more clearly and effectively during the meeting.
5. Your resume emphasizes your professional skills and abilities.
6. Your resume is something tangible which may be left behind or attached to a follow-up note, reinforcing the impression you made during an interview or meeting.

**Tips for Formatting Your Resume:**

* Stay consistent throughout the document. If you use bullets for one job description, use them for all job descriptions. Use consistent formatting on headings.
* Use a consistent and professional header or letterhead for all documents you submit to a potential employer, including your resume, cover letter, writing sample, and list of references.
* Do not include salary information, nor personal data (age, marital status, religion).
* Generally, there are two formats for resumes: chronological resumes, and functional resumes.
  + Chronological resumes, as the title implies, list your previous employment in reverse chronological order, beginning with your most recent job.
  + Functional resumes are organized to highlight specific skills, qualifications, and accomplishments.
* Remember that the legal profession is a fairly conservative one, which means your best bet is to stick with a conservative approach to resume writing. For example:
  + Use the same font as the Courts would require, which typically means Times New Roman or Courier, 12 point font.
  + Don’t use abbreviations, slang, or informal language.
  + Don’t use gimmicks—no headshots, scented letters or resumes that play music when opened as an attachment.
  + Use a professional-sounding email address, such as some combination of your first and/or last name.

**Resume Sections You Might Wish to Include:**

* Contact information: your name, address, phone number and professional email.
* Bar admissions: the jurisdictions in which you have been admitted to practice law, along with dates of admission.
* Education: Begin with your Juris Doctor, then list any other graduate degrees, and finally your undergraduate degrees. No need to list high school education, unless you believe it will help make a potential connection with the employer.
  + Honors: list any awards or honors you received while you were a student.
  + Activities: list any extracurricular activities in which you participated and any
* Legal experience: paid employment in the legal field and any internships, clerkships or other unpaid legal experience, listing the following:
  + Your title or position at the organization;
  + The name and location of the employer;
  + The beginning and end dates of your employment;
  + A brief description of your most significant duties and achievements on the job, using action verbs and words which denote responsibility.
* Other professional or work experience that may be of interest to potential legal employers.
* Volunteer work or community service.
* Trade and professional association memberships.
* Published works.
* Past speaking engagements.
* Skills: list specialized skills you possess that are relevant to the position; technical skills; languages you speak and your level of ability.

**Sample Chronological Resume:**

**John Smith, J.D.**

121 Main Street, Andover, MA 01810

978-555-1212

j.smith@mslaw.edu

**Bar Admission:**

Massachusetts Bar, member in good standing since November 27, 2014

**Education:**

Massachusetts School of Law, Juris Doctor, 2014, *cum laude*

GPA: 3.21

Activities: Treasurer, Student Bar Association, 2012-2014

Awards: CALI Award for Excellence in Evidence course

Boston College, Bachelor of Arts in Politics and American Studies, 2010, *cum laude*

GPA: 3.28

Activities: Member, Law Society, 2007-2010; President, Intramural Lacrosse Club, 2007-2010

**Legal Experience:**

Intern, Middlesex County District Attorney’s Office, Woburn, Massachusetts, June-Dec 2013

* Working as a certified student attorney under Supreme Judicial Court Rule 3:03, assisted with prosecution of theft offenses, assault and battery charges, and various drug-related crimes.
* Conducted research and drafted trial memoranda. Assembled trial notebooks. Successfully argued two motions in court.
* Consulted with senior attorneys and victim/witness advocates; worked collaboratively with other team members.

Clerk, Law Office of Samuel Jones, North Andover, Massachusetts, 2012-2013

* Assisted sole practitioner on various matters involving criminal defense and domestic relations.
* Conducted legal research. Drafted litigation documents, including Complaints and Answers, motions, and memoranda.
* Served as point of contact for clients.

**Community Service and Volunteer Activities:**

Coach, Lacrosse Association of Greater Boston, 2011-present

**Sample Functional Resume:**

**Jeanne Smith, J.D.**

121 Main Street, Andover, MA 01810

978-555-1212

jeanne.smith@mslaw.edu

**Professional Summary:**

Senior associate attorney with experience handling various transactional and litigation matters, along with legal management experience.

**Experience:**

Transactional Experience:

* Negotiated and drafted legal documents for hundreds of manufacturing projects with commercial clients nationwide.
* Completed two mergers and one acquisition for a major manufacturing client.

Litigation Experience:

* Managed a litigation portfolio of nearly 80 active lawsuits or claims in Massachusetts state and Federal courts.
* Resolved complex claims and litigation in various areas, including intellectual property litigation for major manufacturing company clients.

Legal Management Experience:

* Oversaw hiring, firing, and training of litigation paralegals and other legal staff to assist the attorneys in the firm’s litigation department.

**Work History:**

Smith & Jones, LLP, Boston, Massachusetts, Senior Associate, 2013-present

Jones & Smith, P.C., Wakefield, Massachusetts, Associate, 2010-2013

**Bar Admission:**

Massachusetts Bar, member in good standing since November 27, 2010

**Education:**

Massachusetts School of Law, Juris Doctor, 2010, *cum laude*

GPA: 3.21

Activities: Treasurer, Student Bar Association, 2008-2010

Awards: CALI Award for Excellence in Evidence course

Boston College, Bachelor of Arts in Politics and American Studies, 2005, *cum laude*

GPA: 3.28

Activities: Member, Law Society, 2003-2005; President, Intramural Lacrosse Club, 2002-2005

**Memory-Jogging Exercise to Help Draft Your Resume:**

Fill out a sheet for every job you have held and include the following:

Job title:

Organization:

Dates:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| A specific activity in which you have engaged | The skills and special knowledge you used to engage in the activity | A positive result from the activity |
|  |  |  |

**List of Action Verbs for Your Resume:**

Accomplished Arbitrated Calculated Conceived

Achieved Argued Canceled Concluded

Acquired Arranged Catalogued Conceptualize

Acted Ascertained Caused Condensed

Activated Assembled Centralized Conducted

Adapted Assessed Chaired Conferred

Added Assigned Changed Connected

Addressed Assisted Charted Conserved

Adjusted Assumed Checked Considered

Administered Attained Chose Consolidated

Adopted Attended Classified Constructed

Advised Audited Closed Consulted

Aided Authored Coached Continued

Allocated Averted Collaborated Contracted

Analyzed Awarded Collected Controlled

Answered Balanced Combined Converted

Anticipated Began Communicated Convinced

Appeared Bolstered Compared Coordinated

Applied Briefed Compiled Corrected

Appointed Brought Completed Correlated

Appraised Budgeted Composed Counseled

Approved Built Computed Created

Critiqued Drew Extracted Incorporated

Dealt Earned Facilitated Increased

Debated Edited Filed Influenced

Decided Educated Finalized Initiated

Decreased Elected Focused Informed

Defined Eliminated Formed Innovated

Delegated Employed Formulated Inspected

Demonstrated Enforced Fostered Instituted

Described Engineered Found Instructed

Designed Enlarged Founded Integrated

Detailed Enlisted Gained Interpreted

Detected Ensured Gathered Interviewed

Determined Established Gave Introduced

Developed Estimated Generated Invented

Devised Evaluated Governed Invested

Diagnosed Examined Granted Investigated

Directed Excelled Guided Involved

Discovered Expanded Handled Joined

Dispensed Expedited Headed Judged

Displayed Experienced Helped Kept

Distributed Experimented Highlighted Learned

Diverted Explained Identified Lectured

Documented Explored Illustrated Licensed

Doubled Expressed Implemented Liquidated

Drafted Extended Improved Lobbied

Logged Participated Qualified Researched

Made Perceived Quantified Resolved

Maintained Performed Questioned Responded

Managed Persuaded Raised Restored

Mapped Piloted Ranked Reviewed

Marketed Pinpointed Rated Revised

Matched Pioneered Read Revitalized

Met Prescribed Received Salvaged

Modeled Presented Recommended Satisfied

Modernized Prevented Reconciled Scheduled

Monitored Processed Reconstructed Secured

Motivated Procured Recorded Selected

Named Produced Recruited Separated

Navigated Programmed Redesigned Served

Negotiated Prohibited Reduced Set

Nominated Promoted Referred Shaped

Observed Proofed Refined Simplified

Obtained Proposed Rehabilitated Sketched

Offered Protected Reinforced Sold

Opened Proved Related Solved

Operated Provided Rendered Specified

Ordered Publicized Reorganized Spoke

Organized Published Replied Staffed

Originated Purchased Reported Standardized

Oversaw Pursued Represented Started

Streamlined Treated

Strengthened Uncovered

Studied Undertook

Structured Unified

Submitted United

Suggested Updated

Summarized Upgraded

Supervised Used

Supplemented Verbalized

Supplied Verified

Symbolized Weighed

Synergized Worked

Synthesized Wrote

Systematized

Tabulated

Tailored

Targeted

Taught

Tended

Tested

Trained

Transacted

Transcribed

Translated

Traveled