

By: Ben Sims

K-State Research and Extension Greenwood County

Agriculture Extension Agent

*“Building a Resume”*

The practicality of building a resume is not only for young adults graduating from college. Being able to efficiently and cohesively compile your personal and professional experiences into a document to apply for jobs or professional development opportunities is an art this still applies to many adults well into their professional careers.

A resume is not designed to list every single skill and experience that you have, but instead to help you obtain a job interview. You can do this by highlighting your skills, strengths, and personal experiences. More than likely, you will be uploading your resume onto an online system that will be reviewed by an Applicant Tracking System software program. This software will organize and rank resumes based on key words and phrases, in turn, gathering resumes of applicants most relevant to the job search.

When formatting your resume, utilize Microsoft Word, and omit a header/footer, text boxes, tables, columns, or italics. Use standard 10-12 sized font in a text like Arial or Times New Roman. Left align your text, with dates aligned on the right. Write out months i.e. June 2023 – August 2023. It can be hard to keep your resume simple, when sometimes we want to add as much flare as we can in order to get noticed. However, stick to simple texts and titles like “Work Experience.” Then you can bring that flare to the interview!

A good approach is to tailor your resume to whatever it is you are applying for. Match your skills to the position description. Review the description and identify key skills the employer is looking for. Then you can incorporate those into your resume. Don’t just say you have the skills, but instead show you have demonstrated them with your experiences.

Next you will want to take stock of your experiences. That is if you don’t already have a record that has done so already. This is why I encourage our 4-H youth to start young with their permanent records and keep those up to date through their years in 4-H. This provides a beneficial tool in building a resume and capturing experiences you’ve accumulated over the years. In addition, there’s nothing stopping you from building on that 4-H permanent record through college. If you don’t have a record like this, that’s okay! Take some time to sit back and reflect. You may even be able to consult a mentor or close friend that has some insight into your experiences and could refresh your memory on experiences that may have slipped your mind.

Once you have your experiences cataloged, customize your document to emphasize college experiences. Don’t include anything from high school or after your freshman/sophomore year of college unless it is relevant. This is especially the case if you are trying to re-build a resume having been in the job search market for some time. You may have been in a job for 10 years and find yourself looking elsewhere. More than likely, listing anything beyond your college degree, as it relates to your time in college, will pale in comparison to the amount of experience you have obtained over a decade in a professional job environment.

Then finally, identify and communicate your skills that best outline your qualifications for the job. Communicate through bulleted, action items. Begin each bullet with an action verb (e.g. administered, collaborated, analyzed, applied, developed, budgeted, illustrated, counseled, etc.). Make sure you are using the correct tense (i.e. present and past tense). Use brief, yet descriptive phrases to show how you have acquired and/or utilized your skills, abilities, and knowledge.

In conclusion, entering the job market can be a scary and daunting task. You must have faith in yourself, and don’t be afraid to lean on those in your circle to help reflect on your experiences and identify the value you have. Best of luck in your endeavors!