What is a Functional Resume?

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Your resume is a powerful tool that assists in selling your skills, accomplishments, and experience to potential employers, helping you to ultimately secure a job. There are several types of formats that you could chose from while crafting your resume. However, you must take utmost care to utilize that which best suits you and fulfills your requirements. The most common types of formats are the chronological, the functional, and a combination of both.

If you have a strong experience record and wish to showcase your career progression, it's best that you use the chronological format. Here your resume lists your employment history and accomplishments in various industries, in the reverse order, with your most current position listed first. This is a very effective format if there are no gaps between the positions held by you and if you wish to display the vastness of your experience in a particular industry. Employers typically prefer this type of resume because it's easy to decipher what jobs you have held and when you have worked at them.

The functional resume:

A functional resume makes up for one of the main types of resumes. Unlike the chronological format, this style focuses more on your skills and accomplishments and experience, rather than your employment history.

Who should use the functional format?

While selecting the type of resume you wish to have, it is of prime importance that you understand your requirements and weigh the advantages and disadvantages of using the one you have selected. If you fall into any of the below categories, it is advisable that you use the functional format.
-Those whose talents and accomplishments outweighs listing employers, job titles and length of service.
-Those with significant gaps in employment history (could be due disability; illness; home making; education; family needs)
-Those who wish to re-enter the work force or those who wish to enter a field very different from all that their previous experience talk about.
-Those with diverse experiences that don't really lead to a definite path in any particular industry and is different from the work they wish to do.
-Those with major achievements in their volunteer work or hobbies. (Here, transferable skills attained through such activities are brought to the forefront. Eg. interpersonal and team work skills; management and leadership skills; quantitative skills etc.)

-Those who performed very similar activities throughout their past positions and wish to avoid repetitions in listing or wish to deemphasize the lack of progression in their careers.
-Those who are under qualified, too young, or senior job seekers who wish to deemphasize the ‘age or time factor’.
-Those who would look overqualified due to the chronological listing.
-Those such as college students with minimum experience or experience that is unrelated to their chosen careers.

How to Write a Functional Resume

While crafting a functional resume, the writer needs to be profoundly creative and innovative in adopting a style which focuses on the skill set of the person and showcases abilities that most probably could be overlooked in a chronological format. The essential talent lies in the resume being tailored to perfectly fit the position being applied for. The grouping of information, the arrangement of skills and accomplishments, the positioning of sections, and the language adopted can be considered as some of the prime aspects that go to creating an effective functional resume. Some of the points that need to be kept in mind are as follows:

-Dedicate a good amount of time in planning out the design of the resume.
-Arrange sections and points in a manner that will best showcase your contributions and accomplishments and deemphasize those aspects in your career that could prove disadvantageous in your job search.
-Keep it clear and concise in order to achieve the desired impact.

Since a functional resume places a good deal of importance on what you know and have accomplished rather than on where you have worked, you need to be able to craft it in a way that allows the reader to see all of your skills and accomplishments. Like any advertisement, you are to understand the fact that your product (in this case your abilities) is to be displayed in the most attractive manner. Be it chronological or functional or a combination of both, be sure to use that format which sells your product – ‘you’.