

Your resume is a representation of you and your qualifications, so it is important that it showcase your accomplishments and communicate effectively to a potential employer. One of the best ways to do that is to use a functional resume format, which allows you to use strong accomplishment statements that illustrate your skills and attributes.

What is a functional resume?

A functional resume format is designed to showcase your skills and attributes based on specific categories. This format is a departure from the more traditional chronological resume format, but is quite effective when properly written.

It is a very effective format for communicating your strengths, especially if you are changing professions, your work history is somewhat spotty, or your skills are based on life experience rather than formal education or professional occupations.

Creating a functional resume

The first step is to make a list of achievements and turn them into accomplishment statements. They do not have to be grandiose or revolutionary; they just have to be truthful and useful for illustrating a skill or attribute that would be valuable to a potential employer.

A good accomplishment statement is very specific. It contains a description of the action you took (using active language) as well as a description of the result(s) you achieved. The result should be measurable and quantifiable so that a potential employer can see there is substance to your accomplishment.

Do not expect your accomplishment statements to be perfect the first time around, or even the second or third time around. Write them down, edit and revise them, then put them down for 24 hours or so to let the ideas percolate in your mind. When you return to what you previously wrote, you will likely come up more ideas and more revisions to improve the strength of your statements. Remember, though, that your statements should be clear, concise, and not too wordy.

Skill and attribute categories

Once your accomplishment statements are written, it is time to group them together based on the category of skill or attribute they illustrate. Examples:

- Project Management
- Design Engineering
- Quality Control and Maintenance

- Software Development
- Site Management
- Product Development Engineering
- Research & Development

The categories you use will depend entirely on the skills and attributes you possess and want to emphasize.

Showcase your accomplishments

The beauty of a functional resume is that you can easily adapt and adjust it as needed to showcase your accomplishments. For example, if you apply for a job that requires project management experience more than Research & Development, simply change the order of information to put the project management category toward the top.

This allows you to customize your resume to emphasize the qualifications you possess that match up well with the qualifications sought by a potential employer.