

WRITING CAREER OBJECTIVES

Whether to include a career objective on a résumé is an often-asked question among job seekers, and opinions on the issue vary among employers and even within organizations. Human resource professionals prefer applicants to include career objectives on their résumés. Including an objective assists the human resources department in routing the large quantity of résumés received to the proper places within an organization and indicates where the résumé should be filed for future review if current positions are not available in the area specified by the objective. Hiring managers, however, are usually indifferent because they are better able to assess the qualifications included within your résumé and how those qualifications would best benefit their organization. The final decision on whether to include a career objective is yours. Before making that final judgment, however, you should develop a complete understanding of a career objective's function and of the different formats for career objectives.

The Purpose of a Career Objective

Including a career objective on your résumé can serve three functions:

1. Provide you with a reference point in constructing your résumé so that you select only the most important and relevant information about yourself to include in the résumé.
2. Indicate a connection between the type of position you are seeking and the type of position an employer is offering.
3. Assure a prospective employer that you have career goals and direction. Every résumé you submit for consideration of employment should be targeted to that specific position and employer, including the career objective. Even if you have several different career options in mind, remember that one general résumé will not be an effective self-marketing tool for every position. Use a computerized word processor to create several different versions of your résumé with different objectives.

→ **HOT TIP:** As a college student and/or young professional, not having a detailed plan for your career path is completely acceptable.

However, what is not okay is not trying to figure one out. Get started in setting your career goals today!

Types of Objectives

- ◆ Statement of Professional Position - simply states a professional title.

Examples:

Veterinarian
Beef Cattle Geneticist
Equine Nutrition Consultant
Canine Behaviorist

- ◆ Statement Reflecting Functional Area - refers to the fact that you are seeking an "entry-level" position and provides your working area of interest.

Examples:

"An entry level position in agricultural lending"
"An entry-level dairy management position"
"An entry level position in pharmaceutical research"

- ◆ Statement of Functional Skills and Preferences indicates your preferences with regards to geographic location, employment sector,

organizational size, and/or other characteristics in addition to identifying your practical skills.

Examples:

"An administrative position with a breed association that provides an opportunity to use my marketing and public relations skills"

"An entry-level sales position with a large-scale agricultural equipment company in the Southwest United States"

- ◆ Short Term / Long Term Format - specifies both your short term goal and your long term ambition.

Example:

Short Term Objective: "A summer internship in behavioral ecology and regulation at a national or state park."

Long Term Objective: "Graduate education in meat science leading to an administrative position with the USDA"

- ◆ Seeking/Offering Format - serves the same purpose as the statement of functional skills and preferences, but is more direct.

Example:

"Seeking: A supervisory position with a Midwest meat processing facility."

"Offering: Practical experience in carcass evaluation and processing methods; knowledge of required sanitation regulations; proficient computer and communication skills"

- **HOT TIP:** When developing a targeted résumé for a specific position, use key words from the position description to describe your qualifications.

Tips for Writing Objectives

- ◆ Be specific. Employers won't waste their time trying to figure out what job fits you.

Employers are seeking people who know what they want. Be sure you tell them.

- ◆ State only one desired work type in a single objective. Stating multiple functional areas of work interest conveys indecisiveness and a lack of career direction.

- ◆ Avoid using phrases such as:
"a challenging and interesting position"
"opportunity for advancement"
"dealing with people"
"a progressive organization"

Remember that your résumé should distinguish you from the other applicants and that every résumé writer is seeking a situation that can be described by at least one of these phrases.

- ◆ Develop an objective, and résumé, that is employer-focused rather than self-focused. Use your objective to state the contributions you can make to the position, not simply what you expect from an employer.