

HOW TO WRITE A PROFESSIONAL RESUME

Follow these steps when drafting a resume for your next job application:

1. Start by choosing the right resume format

A “format” is the style and order in which you display information on your resume. There are three commonly used resume formats you can choose from depending on which is right for you: chronological (or reverse-chronological), functional or a combination.

A chronological resume format places the professional history section first and is a good option if you have a rich professional work history with no gaps in employment.

Chronological Resume Format

Name and contact information

Janet Chobot
Little Rock, Arkansas • (123) 456-7891
agardner@email.com

Summary or objective

Summary
An exceptionally organized and friendly dental assistant with 3+ years of successful experience working with dental offices and clients.

Professional history

Smith Family Dentistry, Dental Assistant
July 2017 – Present

- Clean and prepare treatment rooms
- Prepare patient to be seen by for dental treatment
- Answer common patient questions about dental procedures, treatments, and issues

E&H Dental, Office Assistant
August 2015 – July 2017

- Organized client schedules
- Received patients upon arrival
- Handled client billing and paperwork
- By end of work experience, took on key dental assistant roles

Educational history

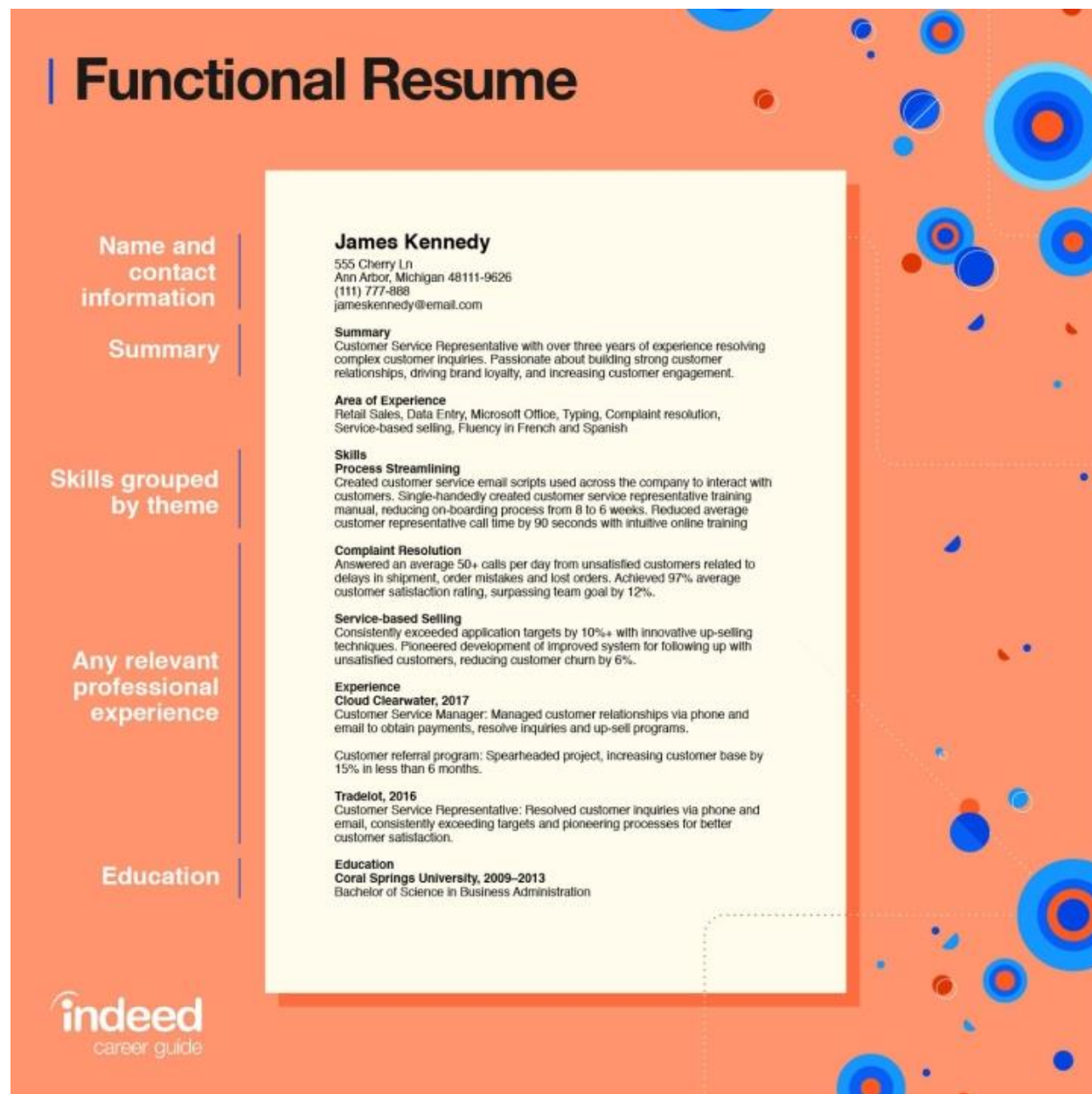
Little Road Junior College
August 2012 – June 2014
Certified Dental Assistant Program

Skills and abilities

Skills
Dental assistant skills include: DANB certification • X-ray certification • Denture impressions • Calming personality and demeanor • Hygienic • Minor oral surgery experience

indeed
career guide

The functional resume format emphasizes the skills section and is a good option if you are switching industries or have some gaps in your work history.



The image shows a functional resume template for James Kennedy. The resume is set against a light orange background with a pattern of blue and orange circles of various sizes. On the left side, there are five vertical labels: 'Name and contact information', 'Summary', 'Skills grouped by theme', 'Any relevant professional experience', and 'Education'. The resume content is organized into sections: Name and contact information, Summary, Area of Experience, Skills (with sub-sections for Process Streamlining, Complaint Resolution, and Service-based Selling), Experience (with sub-sections for Cloud Clearwater, 2017 and Tradelot, 2016), and Education.

Functional Resume

Name and contact information

James Kennedy
555 Cherry Ln
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48111-9626
(111) 777-888
jameskennedy@email.com

Summary
Customer Service Representative with over three years of experience resolving complex customer inquiries. Passionate about building strong customer relationships, driving brand loyalty, and increasing customer engagement.

Area of Experience
Retail Sales, Data Entry, Microsoft Office, Typing, Complaint resolution, Service-based selling, Fluency in French and Spanish

Skills

Process Streamlining
Created customer service email scripts used across the company to interact with customers. Single-handedly created customer service representative training manual, reducing on-boarding process from 8 to 6 weeks. Reduced average customer representative call time by 90 seconds with intuitive online training

Complaint Resolution
Answered an average 50+ calls per day from unsatisfied customers related to delays in shipment, order mistakes and lost orders. Achieved 97% average customer satisfaction rating, surpassing team goal by 12%.

Service-based Selling
Consistently exceeded application targets by 10%+ with innovative up-selling techniques. Pioneered development of improved system for following up with unsatisfied customers, reducing customer churn by 6%.

Experience

Cloud Clearwater, 2017
Customer Service Manager: Managed customer relationships via phone and email to obtain payments, resolve inquiries and up-sell programs.

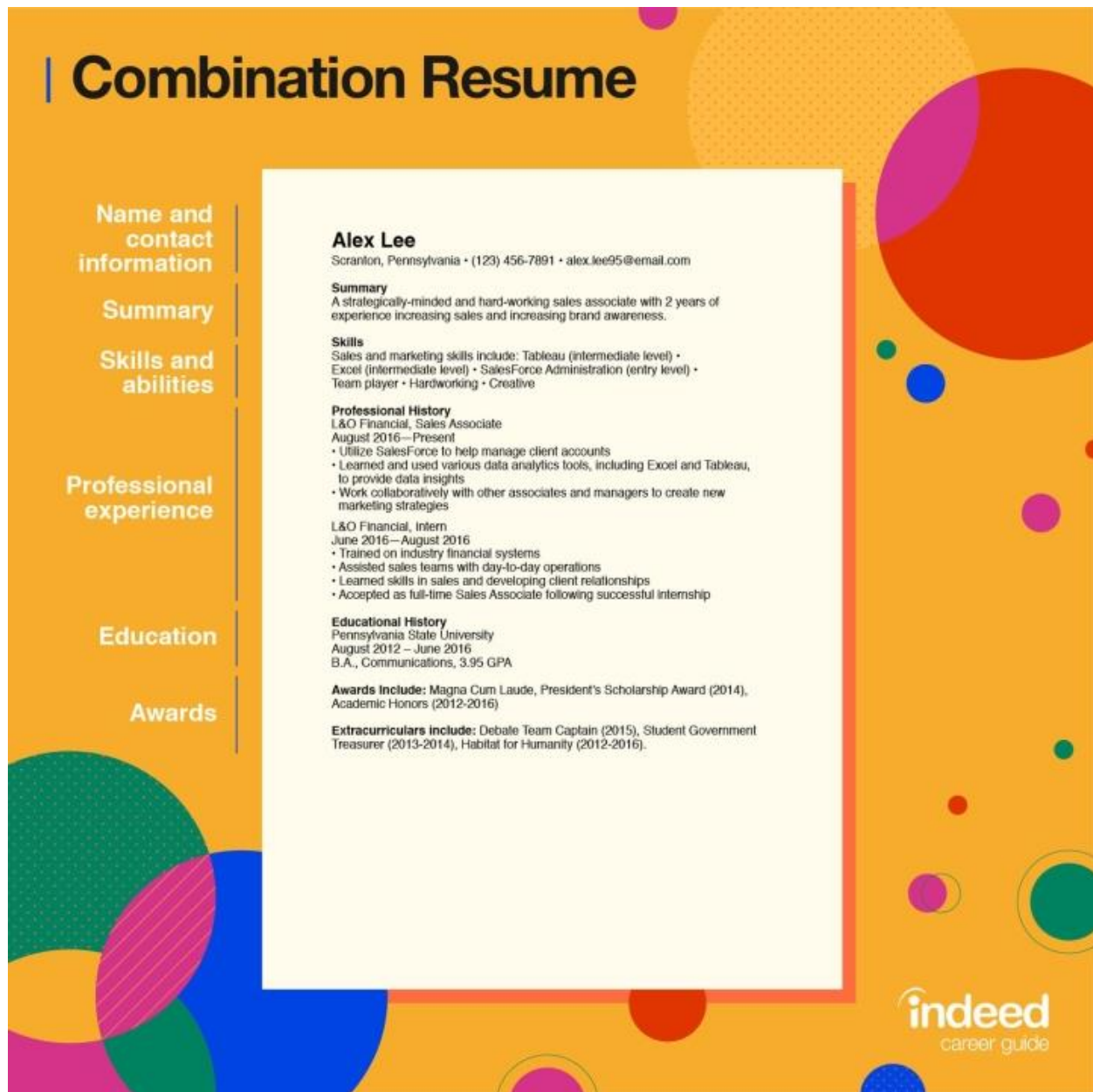
Customer referral program: Spearheaded project, increasing customer base by 15% in less than 6 months.

Tradelot, 2016
Customer Service Representative: Resolved customer inquiries via phone and email, consistently exceeding targets and pioneering processes for better customer satisfaction.

Education
Coral Springs University, 2009–2013
Bachelor of Science in Business Administration

indeed
career guide

The combination resume format is a good option if you have some professional experience, where both skills and work history are equally important.



2. Include your name and contact information

Your resume should begin with your name and contact information, including your email address and phone number. You have a choice about whether or not to include your mailing address. Your name should be highly visible at the top of your resume with a bolded or larger font than the rest of the document, but no more than a 14-point size.

3. Add a resume summary or objective

After your contact information, you have the *option* to include either a resume summary or objective statement. An objective statement quickly explains your career goals and is a good choice for those with limited professional experience, such as recent college or high school graduates. A resume summary is a short statement that uses active language to describe your relevant work experience and skills.

4. List your soft and hard skills

Take a moment to consider which skills make you a great fit for the job. Review the job description and highlight keywords that you have had proven success with in the past. Consider both hard (technical) and soft (interpersonal) skills, as well as transferable skills you can use when changing careers or industries. Create a skills section with the keywords that are relevant to the employer. List any required skills like certifications or licenses first.

5. List your professional history with keywords

Write your professional history section in reverse-chronological order. Start with your most recent job and provide a short description, including the company name, time period in which you were employed, your job title and a few key achievements during your time at the company. You might also include relevant learnings or growth opportunities you experienced while employed there.

When listing your professional history, you should keep a few best practices in mind:

1. Use numbers to measure your impact, when possible. Including specific numerical achievements can help employers understand your direct potential value to their company.

Example: “Developed new process for requesting supplies, reducing fulfillment time by 10%.”

2. Use keywords from the job description. Similar to your skills section, you should also include information from the job description in your job history bullets. For example, if the job description mentions the importance of meeting sales quotas, you could include information about how you’ve met or exceeded quotas in past roles.

Example: “Achieved goal of reaching 250% annual sales quota, winning sales MVP two quarters in a row.”

3. Be brief. Employers have mere seconds to review your resume, so you should keep your descriptions as concise and relevant as possible. Try removing filler words like “and,” and “the.” You should also only list key achievements instead of multiple lines describing your role.

4. Use action verbs. Make a stronger impact by using action verbs to describe your professional achievements. Some examples include “developed,” “saved,” “drove” and “managed.”

Follow the same process for other work experiences. If you do not have extensive professional history, you should also include internships and volunteer opportunities following the same format.

6. Include an education section

An education section will be especially valuable if you have limited work experience (such as recent college or high school graduates) or if you are transferring to a new industry. You can include information such as:

Relevant coursework

Grade point average (if above 3.5)

Participation in clubs or organizations

Leadership positions held

Awards, achievements or certifications

When writing your education section, you should include the name of the institution, dates of attendance and your degree or area of study. If you are applying to mid- or higher-level positions, you might remove all but the name of your school and dates of attendance to make room for more relevant professional experience on your resume.

If you have certifications or licenses that are relevant to the job description, you can include them in this section as well. To save space, you can leave off any credentials that are not directly related to the requirements of this job.

7. Consider adding optional sections

If you have significant white space on your resume, consider adding an achievements or interests section. This can help supplement a shorter resume, especially for those with limited work and educational experience. Make sure the achievements and interests you list support your career goals and are relevant to potential employers.

8. Format your resume

While the layout of your resume is important, you should also take time to pay attention to formatting details like font style, font size, margins and spacing. Formatting your resume can make it look clean, professional and improve readability. This is key when attempting to keep an employer’s attention. Here are a few key tips that can help make your resume look polished:

Make your font between 10 and 12 point size.

Select a font that is clean and easy to read like Arial or Helvetica; avoid stylized fonts.

Make sure your margins are 1 to 1.5 inches.

Make your name and section headers bold or slightly bigger in font size (no more than 14 points).

Use bullet points when listing several different pieces of information, like under your education and professional history sections.

9. Proofread your resume

Carefully review your resume for spelling, grammar and punctuation errors. Reading your resume backward can help you identify errors by presenting the words in a new order. You should also ask trusted friends, colleagues, professors and family members if they can review your resume. Third-party opinions can help reveal new information you might have overlooked.

If your resume is more than one page, review for ways to consolidate or shorten each section by removing filler words or extraneous information. Two pages may be acceptable if you are applying for high-level positions or industries like health care or academia.

10. Tailor your resume for each position

It's important to revise your resume to tailor it to each position you apply for. For each job, adjust the keywords in the skills section so that it's a great fit for what the employer needs. You should also change what you emphasize in the professional history and educational experiences sections depending on what's listed in the job description.