

# COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Office of Career Services

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## RESUME WRITING FOR THE CAREER CHANGER

Experienced professionals making a career change face particular challenges. Employers tend to be conservative, preferring to hire candidates with prior experience in their sector. Therefore, a career changer must convey in their resume that they understand the new sector they are entering, have relevant transferable skills, and the enthusiasm and focus to persist and succeed in their new career.

Most career changers benefit from revising the format of their resume to highlight their relevant skills and new career direction. There are 2 common options to consider. One option is to write a skills-based resume, which lists skills with their accomplishments and includes employment history only briefly at the bottom of the resume. Another option is to use a more traditional format, but be creative in how it is organized, for example, dividing the Experience section, with the most relevant experience at top under a Relevant Experience heading and older, less relevant experience at the bottom under an Other Experience category.

Major headings may include the following:

### PROFILE

It can be helpful to begin the resume with a summary of key skills that match the employer's needs. This helps the employer know that you both understand and have the skills needed to succeed in your new field. These skills can appear in a short paragraph or "bullet" format.

### OBJECTIVE

You may want to include an objective to make clear to the employer the type of position you are now seeking.

### EDUCATION

This makes clear to the employer that you have committed to returning to school to develop the knowledge and skills to facilitate a career change. You may want to add specific relevant coursework also.

### EXPERIENCE

Be sure to write your job descriptions in a way that will present your background in a positive light to the employer. Highlight the skills that will be needed in your new field and avoid any jargon which is typical of your old field but rather use the terminology common to your new field.

### SPECIAL SKILLS

Include languages and computer skills if they are relevant.

### ACTIVITIES

Include any activities relevant to your new field, such as professional organizations, school groups, etc.

### PUBLICATIONS

Include this information if you want to demonstrate strong writing skills, especially for research oriented or academic jobs.

# Sample Functional Resume

## Recommended Format for Career Changers

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### SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS

- Six months as liaison officer to higher United Nations and Nordic Battalion Headquarters in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.
- Four years progressive experience in problem solving, training, and decision making, with increasing responsibility.
- Extensive hands-on experience administering, planning and managing operations in the following areas: personnel/staff development, maintenance, supply operation, telecommunication and information management.
- Experience in Joint Task Force and multi-national operations.
- Security Clearance: Top Secret – Sensitive Compartmentalized Information from U.S. Department of Defense.

### EDUCATION

- December 2006 **COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY, School of International and Public Affairs** New York, NY  
**Master of International Affairs** in International Security Policy and Western European Studies
- June 2000 **LEWIS AND CLARK COLLEGE** Portland, OR  
**Bachelor of Arts** in International Affairs with a minor in Political Science

### MANAGEMENT SKILLS

- Coordinated and organized Danish Engineers from United Nations Protection Forces, Zagreb, Croatia to train U.S. soldiers in Land Mine Awareness.
- Arranged and planned for the Nordic Battalion / United Nations Preventive Deployment to train U.S. personnel in snowmobile operations.
- Supervised 13-man team in the Nijmegen Four-Day Marches to 1<sup>st</sup> place finish, military component, in this international competition earning the Army Achievement Medal.

### ORGANIZATIONAL SKILLS

- Administered \$25,000,000 in equipment for one year, with no losses.
- Organized and led seamless and orderly equipment transfer worth in excess of \$15,000,000.
- Managed eight-person staff responsible for 24-hour operations center during a 6-month deployment while serving with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization in Bosnia-Herzegovina.
- Developed contents of presentation given to Secretary of Defense William Perry, and U.S. Army Europe, Commander, General William Crouch.

### OVERSEAS EXPERIENCE

- Six-month deployment to the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia as part of the United Nations Preventive Deployment, awarded the Army Commendation Medal, United Nations Medal and Armed Forces Service Medal.
- Six-month deployment to Bosnia-Herzegovina in support of the military provision of the Dayton Peace Accords – Operation Joint Endeavor / Guard, earned Army Achievement Medal (second award), NATO Medal and Armed Forces Service Medal (second award).
- Collaborated in the HaU.S. Rissen Program, an exchange seminar regarding the economics of and the political situation in Germany.

### WORK EXPERIENCE

- Program Analyst, International Team, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, 05/05 – Present.
- Battalion Fire Support Officer, Captain, U.S. Army, Germany, 02/04 – 08/04.
- Battalion Targeting Officer, First Lieutenant, U.S. Army, Germany, 05/03 – 02/04.
- Platoon Fire Direction Officer, First Lieutenant, North Atlantic Treaty Organization, Bosnia-Herzegovina, 08/02 – 05/03.
- Platoon Fire Direction Officer, First Lieutenant, U.S. Army, Germany, 04/02 – 08/02.
- Battalion Fire Support Officer, Second Lieutenant, United Nations Preventive Deployment, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, 09/01 – 04/02.
- Company Fire Support Officer, Second Lieutenant, U.S. Army, Germany, 01/01 – 09/01.

### Language

German (Intermediate – Oral Comprehension and Speaking)

### Computer Skills

IBM: Microsoft Office (Word and Powerpoint), Internet Explorer, Microsoft Outlook

## EDUCATION

**COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY**, *School of International and Public Affairs, The Earth Institute*, New York, NY  
*Master of Public Administration in Environmental Science and Policy, received May 2007.*

Relevant Coursework: Environmental Finance, Sustainable Tourism, Environmental Management, International Affairs, Environmental Sciences, Sustainable Development, Economics, Financial Management, Accounting.

**POMONA COLLEGE**, Claremont, CA

*Bachelor of Arts in Political Science, received June 2001*

Relevant Coursework: International Affairs, Environmental Policy, Communications, Economics and Development

STUDY ABROAD: Semester at Sea, *SS Universe Explorer, Spring 2000*

## RELATED EXPERIENCE

**UNITED NATIONS**, *Division for Sustainable Development*, New York, NY, 2007-present  
*Consultant*

- Served on a team of graduate student consultants to produce a publication on the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) of the Kyoto Protocol to serve as a capacity building document for the Division.
- Prepared a regional case study focused on Brazil's development and implementation of CDM project criteria; including an economic analysis, stakeholder review, and project analysis.

**RAINFOREST ALLIANCE**, *Tourism Division*, San José, Costa Rica & New York, NY, 2007-present  
*Policy Intern*

- Collected and analyzed data to develop a publication on the strengths and weaknesses of ecotourism certification to be used by organizations involved in a project funded by the Inter-American Development Bank.
- Interviewed hoteliers throughout Costa Rica on the impacts, advantages, and disadvantages of the Certification for Sustainable Tourism (CST) administered by the government of Costa Rica. Provided conclusions and recommendations based on the information compiled.

**SURFRIDER FOUNDATION**, *New York City Chapter*, New York, NY, 2003-2005  
*Chairman and Co-founder*

- Founded and chaired non-profit environmental organization dedicated to the protection and preservation of the world's oceans and marine environments. Current membership >1,000.
- Successfully organized and implemented regional environmental initiatives, including a program to consistently monitor and test the water quality around New York City.
- Led fundraising efforts and worked with corporate sponsors to raise and manage over \$10,000 in the first year.

## OTHER EXPERIENCE

**IBM CORPORATION**, *Software Group*, New York, NY, 2002-2003  
*Sales & Marketing Specialist*

- Consulted with senior level executives at Fortune 500 companies to identify and provide IT solutions resulting in a 400% growth of sales opportunities and an average return on investment of \$100,000.
- Supervised sales teams in territory with over 50 large strategic clients and a business value in excess of \$1 million.
- Developed and implemented strategic marketing initiatives resulting in increased brand recognition by over 200%.

**INTERWORLD CORPORATION**, New York, NY, 2001-2002  
*Strategic Alliance Associate*

- Successfully managed InterWorld's Strategic Alliance Program resulting in the development of over 20 new business relationships, with companies such as IBM, Sun, Microsoft, and Oracle.
- Developed integrated marketing strategies to leverage partnerships, including website, collateral and presentations.

## PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS, CERTIFICATIONS AND SKILLS

COMPUTER SKILLS: Windows, OSX, MS Office (Word, Excel, PP, Outlook), GIS, SPSS, Smartsuite, ACT 2006.

LANGUAGE SKILLS: Spanish (working knowledge)

CERTIFICATIONS: *-Managing Projects Certificate*, George Washington U. School of Business and Public Policy  
*-ArcGIS Certificate*, ESRI Geographic Information Systems

ASSOCIATIONS: International Ecotourism Society, Foreign Policy Association, American Public Policy Association