



HOW TO CRAFT

A SUCCESSFUL RESUME

**Job Application Recommendations
and Best Practices**



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INTRODUCTION

This guide is designed to be a resource to assist you with creating a successful resume. It also serves as a tool and starting point to help elevate your approach to job application materials. We highly recommend scheduling time with your PGA of America Career Consultant who can work with you one-on-one and help you determine a strategy and customized approach that fits your career aspirations.

In this playbook, we will discuss the following:

- Cover Letters – Creativity and Thoughtfulness
- The Resume – Modern vs. Traditional and What to Include
- Getting Better Results – Strategy
- Formatting, Metrics, and Storytelling
- Relationships and References



Creating a strong and attractive resume is just one piece of the job application puzzle.

It's important to remember that you are “always interviewing” and your application alone will not typically “get” you the job. You must leverage your network, do your homework, interview at a high-level, and showcase how you are the ideal fit for the specific opportunity.

Thank you for allowing us to assist you on your career journey.



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THE COVER LETTER

Cover letters present an opportunity to tell your story and provide a more detailed account of how you will help address the top needs of the position. It's very important to creatively and strategically write a strong cover letter that establishes “**why**” you are the ideal candidate for the position. If you are applying for three different jobs, each cover letter should be different and unique, showcasing that you have done research and you want the job.

Cover Letter – Do's

- Tell a story they cannot get from simply reading your resume
 - ie. Help them “feel” good about you
- Tie your resume experience to how you can solve their problem
- Connect your experience and skills to how you align with their Mission, Vision, and Values
- Use storytelling to highlight your key achievements and skills
- Answer the questions you know they are asking
- Know the key players and who you are addressing the letter to
- Create a clean header that matches your resume and reference page

Cover Letter – Don't's

- Spelling Errors – Grammar should be perfect
- Use a “canned” cover letter, ie. the same letter for every job opportunity
- Open with “My name is,” ... “I am writing to,” ... “To Whom It May Concern,” ... or, “Dear Hiring Manager,”
- Overuse “I” throughout the letter
- Explain the exact same thing that is showcased in your resume
- Write Too Much - Provide just enough so they think, “Tell me more...”



THE RESUME PART 1

The resume is your opportunity to share the **value** you will bring to the position based on your past experiences and accomplishments.

“Why isn’t my resume getting results?”

10 Reasons Why:

- 1. Lack of Job Keywords:** Not using job description keywords is a major reason resumes get overlooked.
- 2. Irrelevant Keywords:** Keywords must reflect your experience. Make sure every point highlights relevant skills.
- 3. Poor Formatting:** Avoid using Microsoft Word templates. Build a visually clean and appealing resume.
- 4. Charts & Graphs:** Robots cannot read images. Including charts & graphs increase the chances your resume is discarded.
- 5. Typos:** Employers and robots check for grammatical errors. Ensure your resume is error-free to avoid the appearance of a rush.
- 6. Lack of Quantifiable Results:** Include actual results to highlight your achievements.
- 7. No Impact Examples:** Employers seek strong contributors. Highlight your results, not just duties, to showcase your impact.
- 8. No Cover Letter:** A cover letter shows you want the job and can explain any experience-job mismatch. It helps to tell your story and demonstrates interest.
- 9. Missing Training/Education:** Don’t leave out certifications, training, or education. They boost your chances of getting noticed.
- 10. Overlooked Projects:** If lacking experience, include relevant projects from school, volunteer work, or personal endeavors to demonstrate your capabilities.

THE RESUME PART 1

Set the Foundation



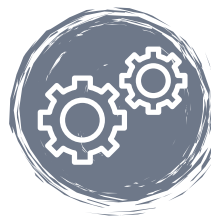
Formatting



**Billboard
Statement**



**Professional
Qualifications
& Experience**



**Education,
Soft & Hard
Skills**



**Honors,
Awards &
Certifications**



**What
People Say**

Formatting

- Utilize programs such as Canva (free website) to identify a format or template that fits your style as well as the type of club or position you are pursuing (Modern vs. Traditional).
- Keep colors balanced (not too extreme or too many colors), and avoid too much or too little “white space” in your document.
- Utilize AI (ChatGPT) when building out your documents if / when you hit road blocks. For example, ask AI to “make this sentence sound more professional and concise.”
- View the formatting from a “bird’s eye” and from the lens of a hiring manager. At a quick glance, does your resume move forward or get tossed to the side?

THE RESUME PART 1

Know Your Metrics

(Have the following information available)

- Facility Gross Revenue
- Facility Ownership Type
- Number of Rounds
- Golf Shop Sales
- COGS
- Total Number of Employees
- Number of People You Supervise
- Number of Events
- Employee Development
- Lessons and Clinics
- Unique Students
- Performance Impact
- Financial Impact to Facility
- Growth of participation in events
- Event Management
- Process Improvements
- Cost Savings
- Space Optimization
- Time and Money Savings
- Innovations that Improved the Facility

FACILITY

**PERSONAL
& TEAM**

**INDIVIDUAL
CONTRIBUTIONS**



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THE RESUME PART 1

Billboard Statement

(Answer these questions to formulate 4-5 lines for your “billboard statement”)

EXPERIENCE

RESULTS

SKILLS

- “What job are you qualified for that would interest the employer?”
- “What **results** can you produce that the employer would be thrilled to compensate you for?”
- “Where have you produced results in the past? Provide examples.”



Billboard Statement Example:

Joe Smith, PGA Certified Professional

Authentic and engaging leader with over fifteen years’ experience in facility management, association leadership, as well as sales and marketing fields.

Extensive experience developing and managing customers / members; excellent interpersonal skills; and ability to implement the highest standards of excellence and professionalism.



- Section award-winning golf professional
- Accomplished and competitive player
- Developer and implementer of strategic plans
- Proficient in human resource management
- Excellent budgetary and financial acumen

THE RESUME PART 2

Types of Resumes

Chronological



A chronological resume is a traditional resume format that lists your professional experience in reverse-chronological order, beginning with your most recent position. This type of resume prioritizes your most relevant professional experience and achievements.

Functional



A functional resume focuses on your relevant skills rather than your work history. It's a modernized approach and also known as a skills-based resume. This format organizes your professional abilities into job-relevant groups. For example, "customer service skills" or "leadership skills."

Choosing between a chronological vs. functional resume is an important decision, as it allows you to **tailor your application** specifically to the unique circumstances or type of job / facility. For example, functional resumes may be more suitable for career transitions. However, if you're applying at a more traditional entity, you will likely want to utilize a chronological resume. In many cases, it is okay to have a combination of both.

THE RESUME PART 2

Professional Qualifications

(Assess your bullet points)

ANALYZE

Does the bullet point sound like a job description or task?

REFINE

If yes, refine the verbiage. If unable to do so, remove the bullet point.

QUANTIFY

If it's possible to refine the verbiage, quantify the activity.



Always try to showcase **growth, initiative**, and how you may have **improved** an area of the operation (above and beyond the job description).



Every bullet point takes up valuable “real estate” within your application materials. There is only so much space available. Confirm that each bullet point has **value** and carries weight. When a hiring manager is skimming through your resume, you want to make sure that the bullet point they happen to land on is valuable and worthy of being included.



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THE RESUME PART 2

Professional Qualifications (Continued)

Before

Head Golf Professional

2008-Present

- Oversaw all golf operations
- Managed golf staff including inside and outside operations staff
- Owned a successful golf shop meeting the needs of the membership
- Handled all tournaments and outings that increased from 2009-2011
- Coordinated drive that led to an increase in membership
- Implemented weekly staff meetings and training programs enhancing the club's high standard of customer service
- Expanded women's and junior golf clinic programs to increase participation in 2009
- Increased annual rounds played yearly from 2008 to present

After

QUALIFICATIONS

Golf Operations

- Class A PGA Professional
- Collaborate with the Director of Golf to create and meet annual operating budgets
- Play golf with members of all skill levels & participate in PGA chapter/section events
- Extensive knowledge of Jonas POS, USGA/GHIN handicap, and Microsoft Office applications
- Take part in monthly Golf and Greens & Grounds Committee Meetings

Tournaments

- Direct point of contact for all golf events at Colleton River, including over 40 member events taking place over two courses and separate clubhouses/dining facilities
- Create and maintain tournament schedules and budgets
- Proficient in Golf Genius Premium tournament software
- Organized and executed over 20 member events and 10 non-member tournaments each year for Savannah Golf Club
- One of three PGA National Resort Tournament Coordinators which serviced over 1,500 groups, producing nearly \$3,000,000 annually

Player Development

- Operation 36 Certified – conduct seasonal adult programming at Colleton River
- Conduct individual and group golf instruction to men, women, and juniors of all skill levels
- Use Trackman, V1 Video, and other technology to offer the highest quality lesson experience for members and guests
- Created learning programs each season which included PGA Junior League Golf, specialized mixed clinics, Ladies 3-Hole Clinics, and junior & ladies supervised practices at Savannah Golf Club

THE RESUME PART 3

What to Include

S.O.A.R. Stories



- **Situation**
- **Obstacle or Objection**
- **Action**
- **Results**

Write these out regularly and they will help you form the bullet points of your resume. Brainstorming unique S.O.A.R. stories will also help you gain confidence while preparing for an interview.



Become a storyteller vs. a task describer.

Soft and Hard Skills



- **Your Strengths** - Possibly listed on a side bar.
- **Hard Skills** - Technical, specific, and measurable knowledge or training you have gained through life experiences, your career, or education.
- **Soft Skills** - Personal habits and traits that shape how you work (on your own and with others). For example, time management, leadership, conflict resolution, etc.

THE RESUME PART 3

What to Include



Qualifications & Experience

- Professional Experience
 - Club Name and City, State
 - Years of Employment and Title(s)
 - Facility Highlight and/or Unique Attributes
 - No bullet points required for experience over 12-15 years old unless there are major accomplishments



Education

- Clearly list your education credentials
- Highlight any additional education
 - Double Major, Minor, Masters Degree
- Split education between formal (college) and professional education



Honors, Awards, and Certifications

- Section Awards, Chapter Awards, and National Awards
- PGA Specialized, Certified, or Master Professional
- Industry Certifications or Legitimate Training(s)
- Vendor Awards or Recognition
- Volunteer & Community Honors / Recognition
- Playing Accomplishments

THE RESUME PART 3

What to Include



Additional Relevant Experience

- Any additional experience that may be relevant to the position (including older positions, if notable).
- Section Involvement – Board, Committees, Task Force



What Else?

- Include hyperlinks to your LinkedIn page or professional website / digital portfolio.
- Customize your LinkedIn URL (remove the numbers).
- Create a clean and professional email address.
- Remove your home address. List only your City / State.
- Add “, PGA” after your name. You’ve earned it!
- Consider creating a digital signature (handwritten) and including it in your cover letter.

Refine, refine, refine. Carefully review your materials with a fresh pair of eyes and remove the fluff. Your resume is your **first impression** to an employer and first impressions matter. Obsess over quality and detail and be proud of the work you have accomplished in your career.

THE RESUME PART 3

What to Include



Portfolios

- Keep it **simple** and allow your portfolio to supplement your resume (not the exact same thing).
- When providing a thoughtful section such as a Teaching Philosophy, try to go above and beyond “how you teach” – rather, how you **engage** with members and drive activity.

Unless the job posting requests a 50-page portfolio, prioritize the **quality** of materials and how they relate to the facility vs. the quantity of pages and images. Make sure it is **relevant** and provides **value** to the job you’re applying for. Portfolios can become outdated collections of photos and spreadsheets from past roles, which does not necessarily provide significant meaning.



Portfolios can be a gamechanger if structured the right way. Try to identify two or three key focus areas on the job description, and provide solutions.



Headshots

- Larger employers may discard materials with headshots, due to potential discrimination concerns.
- If you include a headshot, it should be professional and with business attire.

THE REFERENCE PAGE

WHO

Vendors, Members,
Customers, Peers,
Direct Reports,
Managers, Mentors.

WHAT

Showcase your
relationship, not
just their name
and contact info.

QUOTE

Provides deeper
insight and a
personal touch
into who you are.

Reference List and Testimonials

- Dedicate a section for short testimonials – leverage this opportunity on the front end of the hiring process to help secure an interview. **“Who I Know”** is just as important as **“What I Know”**.
 - These do not replace letters of recommendation.
- Listing references will help you in the application process.
 - “Available Upon Request” is understandable but displaying your connections on the front end reflects transparency and provides the opportunity to showcase your network.
- Make sure your references are familiar with your latest work and willing to speak positively on your behalf.



Make sure they know *you* – not just you know *them*.

- Notify references when you’re applying for opportunities so they are not surprised by a phone call from an employer.
- Choose 3-5 references appropriate for the specific opportunity.
- Maintain regular contact and keep in touch over the years.



THE REFERENCE PAGE

Sample Testimonials

- Pull quotes from existing letters of recommendation
- Out of respect for their time, write the quote, and ask for permission to attribute it to them
- Update quotes based on the job you are pursuing (i.e. do not use a teaching quote for a job that does not emphasize teaching and coaching)

Examples

“

“In the 5 years Joseph Jones has been on the management team at XYZ Golf Club, I have observed that he is a natural leader and very comfortable in the role; decisive and accountable; experienced in managing a high-performing group; and highly skilled in technology and business systems.”

John Doe – President XYZ Golf Club, January 2025

“

“It is my pleasure to recommend Joseph Jones to any prospective employer. In the many years I have mentored Joseph, I found him to be an extraordinary PGA Professional with an unwavering desire for excellence. He is well-organized, dedicated, and extremely knowledgeable.”

Ron James, PGA – Clouds Club Golf Club – February 2025



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strategy and customized approach that
fits your career goals and aspirations.***

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