



OBJECTIVE OR PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

An objective statement or professional summary is an optional resume section. This section can serve as a topic sentence for your resume. The goals identified in your objective (the type of industry or position you are seeking) define the focus for the remainder of your document. The resume sections that follow (education, experience, etc.) are an opportunity to provide supporting evidence for your objective.

If provided, defining your goals while also briefly describing skills or experiences you could contribute to a role or organization can be a useful combination within an objective statement or summary. Like the job search process overall, describing skills or ways you could contribute can balance your “ask” (what you are seeking from the employer – i.e. a job or internship) with what you can “offer.”

Objective Statement Tips

When writing your objective or professional summary, remember to:

- **Keep it job focused.** Your resume is a sales document. It is about what you can do for the employer, not what the employer can do for you.
- **Concise writing is critical:** Because employers read resumes quickly, writing concisely helps them learn more about you. Phrases rather than complete sentences are the norm within resumes. Additionally, personal pronouns are not used within resume writing (no “I...” or “my...” statements).
- **Avoid general statements** such as “seeking a position with the opportunity for growth and advancement” or “seeking a position to advance my career.” Most applicants want to work for growing companies or desire advancement, so identifying these goals in your objective does not help you stand out.

Do I Need an Objective?

Thinking critically about the context of each application often provides the best guidance about whether or not to include an objective statement.

First, all resumes should be sent with a cover letter. This letter should identify the position for which you are applying or indicate you are writing to inquire about opportunities. By providing a cover letter, an objective statement could become repetitive and many job seekers will choose to omit their objective statement. Applicants who include an objective often do so to reinforce goals (1) in case an employer reads their resume first or (2) to provide a reminder of their goals within the resume itself. Ultimately, the decision to include or omit an objective statement is up to you and both approaches are professionally acceptable.

What is the difference between an objective statement and a professional summary?

An **objective statement** is a concise, position-centered statement describing the value you can add and the needs you can fulfill. An objective may include a brief statement of skills and qualifications you will bring to a position.

A **professional summary** is longer and provides more detail than an objective statement. Professional summaries identify the type of position you are seeking and provide lengthier descriptions of skills and qualifications. Professional summaries are most helpful for experienced professionals who aim to demonstrate the applicability of skills from a range or depth of past experiences for a specific type of position. Professional summaries are useful for networking resumes and resumes uploaded to job search websites.

Objective Statement Examples

To obtain an accounting internship with an auditing focus. Strengths include:

- Attention to detail developed through cash-handling positions
- Experience with data entry and spreadsheets
- Demonstrated leadership through campus activities

Experience highlights, skills or strengths can be shared through bullet points (above) or without (below).

Marketing internship with interest in customer relationship management and market research. Offering database experience with Spanish fluency.

This objective-based statement has a nice balance of “ask” and “offer” statements to show the candidate knows what s/he is looking for and what s/he can offer.

Human resources internship, with particular interest in recruitment and training.

This student did not include “offer” details about what s/he will bring to the position. However, s/he did provide specific detail about the type of internship s/he is most interested in pursuing.

Professional Summary Example

Sales record and staff development experience provide outstanding background for Senior Sales Management positions within the publishing industry. Offering 11 years of sales and 9 years of management experience combined with entrepreneurial, team building and implementation skills. Possess leadership ability to conceptualize, structure and achieve market and profit objectives.