

# RESUME DOS AND DON'TS By ELIZABETH GEHRMAN

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**Boldface your name.**

**Instead of an objective, write a focused career summary with bullet points detailing specific skills.**

**Avoid personal information, and never use personal pronouns.**

**List work experience in reverse chronology.**

## OBJECTIVE

After the birth of my twin daughters and an extended maternity leave, I worked part time from home and now would like to get back into full-time work doing Web design and/or retail management. Ideally, I'd like to combine my two interests and do Web design for a retail outlet.

**Make up separate resumes for each job you're interested in.**

**Spell check!**

## WORK EXPERIENCE

**Store manager**, Anchor Marine, Charelstown (1991-1994, part time while in college)

- Managed store, scheduled employees, balanced the books, dealt with vendors, and updated the computer system;
- also sold boat parts and accessories, assembled Coast Guard packages, sent out propellers to be reconditioned, and occasionally pumped gas and helped reupholster boat seating

**Not necessary to include long-ago experience, unless it's directly relevant.**

**Spell check, but don't trust it. Proofread carefully, too.**

**Rather than a job description, list specific accomplishments.**

**Night manager**, Right Aid, Central Square, Cambridge (1994-1996, part time while earning Web design certificate)

- Managed the store from 5 until 9 three nights a week, handled the magazine section, balanced the evening's receipts, dealt with customers, and made deposits

**Jargon. "Using" works just as well.**

**Assistant Web designer**, Gene Jeanie, Woburn (1996-2000)

- Assisted in the development and maintenance of intranet and Internet sites for this start-up custom blue jeans fabricator utilizing

**List all computer skills together in a separate section.**

Dreamweaver, HTML, Flash, and Photoshop

- Occasionally performed validation of completed sites by testing code
- Installed shopping carts by use of CGI scripts
- Created graphics, including icons and logos, using Fireworks and Photoshop

**Quantify "occasionally" in context; i.e., "Performed validation of 12 completed sites" or "Managed 10 people."**

**Web designer**, Konk Computer Services, Cambridge (2001-2005)

- Created and designed new Web interfaces, layouts, and graphics for various company sites
- Met and corresponded with clients to determine their needs
- Helped create corporate websites, portals, and large-scale applications
- Designed trained users and templates on development of future pages

**Did you take a year off after your last job, or just omit something from your resume? You'll have to account for any gaps; be prepared to do so in person.**

**Huh?**

**Leave out information about this being part time and from home; just describe the business.**

**Principal**, wwwweb creative, a Web-services agency I've been running part time out of my home (2007-present)

- Designed and built websites to accommodate clients' budgets and business needs using Photoshop, Illustrator, HTML, Flash, and ActionScript
- Cultivated relationships with writers, photographers, and client liaisons to produce editorial content, mostly for Web-based shopping sites

## EDUCATION:

**Be consistent. None of the other subheads have a colon after them, so this one shouldn't, either.**

BA, English literature with a minor in Spanish and Latin American affairs, UMass-Boston, 1994; earned a four-year degree in three years

Certificate in Graphic and Web Design, Center for Digital Imaging Arts, Boston University, 1996

## COMPUTER SKILLS

Proficient in Photoshop, HTML, ActionScript 2.0 (currently learning 3.0), Flash, Illustrator, Dreamweaver, Acrobat, Bridge, Word, Outlook; familiar with InDesign, Power Point, Excel

**Don't need the version number, especially since you didn't give it for the others.**

## INTERESTS

Scuba diving (not since having the children, but I'd like to get back into it), horseback riding, reading (literary fiction), and astrology

**Too much information. Only list interests that are directly relevant to the job you want.**

## COMMUNITY SERVICE

Leadership Committee member of Charity Begins at Home  
Advisory board member, One Cambridge Committee, a partnership between Chamber of Commerce and Latino business owners  
Treasurer of Central Square Civic Association

References available on request.

**Not necessary to spell this out. It's understood that you will provide references.**

SOURCES: LESLEY THEALL, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF CAREER ADVANCEMENT, KENNEDY SCHOOL, AND PRINCIPAL, SOSILVER COACHING; PATTI FINKEL, CERTIFIED CAREER COACH, THE CAREER PLACE, WOBURN

## How to ace an interview

*The difference between getting a job—and not—is often the personal interview. Nerve-racking, sure, but it's your chance to make a big impression. New York City career coach Frederick Ball, author of "Killer Interviews," has some winning advice.*

■ **Prepare, prepare, prepare.** Know enough about the company or business you're going to see to say why you'd like to work there. Know yourself, too—prepare at least three concrete examples of your accomplishments that illustrate your abilities and show why you're a good fit for the position.

■ **Keep your answers short.** The average American listens for 28 seconds before getting distracted. Practice with a friend in advance, and time your answers to common questions.

■ **When in doubt, overdress.** A formal outfit will at least earn you points for effort. But too-casual clothes will make you look like you don't care about your appearance—or the job.

■ **Be positive.** Never say anything negative about your former employers or colleagues. No one wants to work with a bad-mouther.

■ **Say to the interviewer, "I really want this job."** Many applicants feel they don't need to say this out loud. But because your interviewer has never met you, he may not be able to gauge your enthusiasm from your body language or tone of voice. So declare your interest—passion may even seal the deal for some employers.

■ **Follow up promptly.** Within one or two business days, send a brief note to the interviewer to thank him for talking with you, bring up a point where you two connected, add anything you forgot to say, and re-state your excitement about the job. Use your judgment about whether to send an e-mail or a handwritten letter.

### ACING THE INTERVIEW :: TIPS AND STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESSFUL INTERVIEWING

By Alison Doyle, About.com Guide

**COMPANY RESEARCH** Research should always be your first step. Gathering background information on employers is a crucial element in successful interview preparation. You will need to be prepared to answer the questions "What do you know about our

company"? and "Why do you want to work here?" Knowing as much as possible about the company's past performance and future plans can make your interview more interactive and could be just the leg up you need in a competitive job market. Before the interview review the company's web site and don't be afraid to contact your prospective employer to request details on the position you are interviewing for or to ask for company literature. Google the company to see what other information is available online.

**PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT** Practice makes perfect (or at least leads to improvement). Practice with a friend and record or videotape your responses so you can replay the interview and see how well you did. Prepare answers to commonly asked interview questions. Doing so will help you analyze your background and qualifications for the position.

**BEHAVIORAL INTERVIEWS** Behavior based interviewing is becoming more common. It is based on the premise that a candidate's past performance is the best predictor of future performance. Rather than the typical interview questions on your background and experience, you will need to be prepared to provide detailed responses including specific examples of your work experiences.

The best way to prepare is to think of examples where you have successfully used the skills you've acquired. Take the time to compile a list of responses to both types of questions and to itemize your skills, values, and interests as well as your strengths and weaknesses. Emphasize what you can do to benefit the company rather than just what you are interested in. Also prepare a list of questions you want to ask the interviewer. Remember, you aren't simply trying to get the job - you are also interviewing the employer to assess whether this company and the position are a good fit for you.

**PREPARE FOR THE INTERVIEW** It is very important to be on time for the interview. On time means ten to fifteen minutes early. If need be, take some time to drive to the office ahead of time so you know exactly where you are going. Know the interviewer's name and use it during the interview. If you're not sure of the name, call and ask prior to the interview. Remember to bring an extra copy of your resume and a list of references.

**STAY CALM** During the interview try to remain as calm as possible. Ask for clarification if you're not sure what's been asked and remember that it is perfectly acceptable to take a moment or two to frame your responses so you can be sure to fully answer the question.

**END THE INTERVIEW** with a thank you to the interviewer and reiterate your interest in the position. Then follow-up with a personal Thank You note restating your interest.

