

Building Your Lawyer Resume

By Claire Bellon

When putting together your lawyer resume, you need to think about what you want to emphasize to a potential employer. That will change according to the employer and the position you are applying to. Ideally, you should tailor your lawyer resume to every position you send your resume to (See "[Tailoring Your Legal Resume](#)"). That does not mean having to re-write your entire lawyer resume, but rather customizing certain sections of your resume, including the summary section.

Lawyer Resume Structure

1. *The Summary Section*

Your lawyer resume should start with a clear and concise summary section that highlights your practice areas and skills. This section can be named a number of things such as "Profile," "Overview" or "Summary." The most important thing to remember when drafting this section is to keep it brief and to the point. You can use full paragraphs or bullets, but try to keep your text under six sentences or bullets. Most importantly, be careful about overusing adjectives. If you are going to use adjectives or adverbs be sure to do so sparingly. Also, back up your claims whenever possible. It is better to keep the language objective and let the employer determine the overall value of the skills or accomplishments listed. For example:

PROFILE

- Experienced legal counsel with extensive legal, operations, finance, and strategic planning experience.
- Knowledge of overall business and general management practices, and effective counsel to senior executives regarding the legal implications of various operational and business decisions.
- Able to identify and resolve issues quickly and effectively, minimize risk, and increase efficiency.

2. *The Contact Information Section*

Your name should be in bold and in a larger font than the rest of your resume. The term "e-mail address" is not necessary as it is obvious. A dash or a period after the area code can replace parentheses. Be sure to include at least one phone number, either your home, cell, or both. Never include your work number or work email address on the resume. If you have created a LinkedIn profile, you should consider adding a hotlink of your LinkedIn profile on your resume. Before you include your LinkedIn hotlink on your resume, make sure that the profile you have on LinkedIn completely matches

your lawyer resume. (See "[Optimizing Contact Information On Your Legal Resume](#)"). For example:

JOHN F. DOE

1100 Daisy Street
Miami Beach, FL 33142
johnfdoe@hotmail.com

Cell: (305) 555-5555
Home: (305) 555-6666
<http://www.linkedin.com/johnfdoe>

3. *The Work History Section*

Your professional experience should begin with the full legal name of the company, law firm or organization you have worked for. This will immediately allow an employer to determine if you have the industry or background that would be a good match for his or her organization. Next, provide your full title, as well as your dates of employment and the city and state where you practiced. Finally, provide a short description of the organization your worked for, a description of your responsibilities, and bullets to highlight your various accomplishments. Most legal employers prefer to hire from their competitors, so identifying the organization that you are currently working for or worked for in the past is very important to signal at the beginning of the work history section of your lawyer resume. For example:

LAW FIRM & ASSOCIATES, Miami, FL

Partner, 2000 – Present

General Practice Law Firm with an emphasis on real estate transactions, finance, business organization, litigation, and contracts.

- Implemented all legal aspects of licensing, engineering, contracts, real estate, and business transfers for a Construction Company.
- Directed all legal aspects of real estate acquisition, lending, development, construction, municipal zoning, licensing, leasing, and sales for a major Storage Company.
- Directed and implemented legal and management controls for inventory control, fraud, and employee relations for a regional Automotive Manufacturer, reducing inventory costs by 45%.

4. *The Education Section*

You should list the schools of higher education you attended in reverse chronological order. Begin with the name of the law school and college from which you received your higher education degree. Next, include your degree, the date it was received, and include the city and state of your school for consistent formatting. For example:

FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF LAW, Tallahassee, FL

Juris Doctor, May 2005

MIAMI UNIVERSITY, Miami, FL

Bachelor of Arts in English, *cum laude*, May 2002

Be consistent with your degree format. For example, if you use the abbreviation “J.D.,” use “B.A.” or “B.S.” for an undergraduate degree. If you spell out “Juris Doctor,” then spell out “Bachelor of Arts” or “Master of Business Administration.”

5. Bar Admission and Association Section

Your lawyer resume should include a separate section that includes your bar admission and professional associations. Be sure to include the year of admission for each jurisdiction you were admitted to. Including dates of admission will indicate eligibility for waiver into other jurisdictions, which can be helpful information to potential employer.

LICENSES, ASSOCIATIONS & LANGUAGES

- Admitted to Practice in the State of Florida (2005)
- Admitted to Practice in the State of Maryland (2004)
- Member, American Corporate Counsel Association
- Member, Bar Associations of Florida

While a “do-it-yourself” approach to creating a lawyer resume seems to be the most popular approach, it’s not always the most successful. In today’s competitive legal job market, a professional resume is the single most important tool in getting your foot through the door. Therefore, you may want to consider hiring a professional resume writing service that specializes in lawyer resumes. You will most likely find that working with a professional resume writer is worth the investment.