

Creating a Career Objective

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Objectives

1. To learn the purpose of a career objective.
2. To understand the parts of a career objective.
3. To write a career objective that is not too broad or too narrow.

Introduction

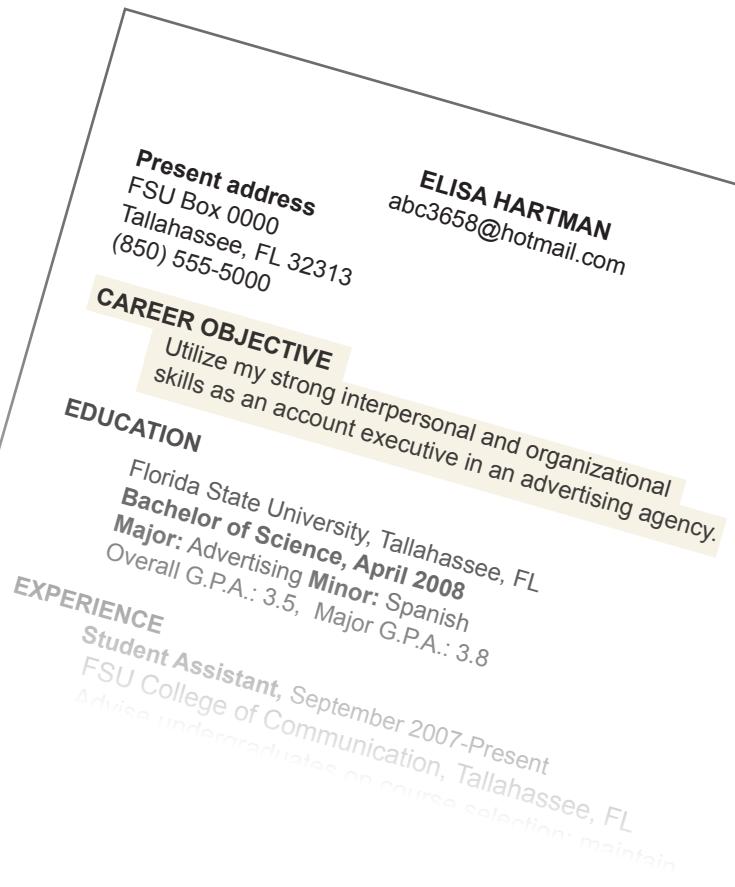
A job campaign consists of many tasks: writing a resume, finding potential employers, reviewing job openings, creating application letters, networking, interviewing, receiving rejections, negotiating job offers, and making many decisions. The best place to start is with a goal or an objective. It may be helpful to ask "What do I want to do?" and "Where do I want to be?"

What is a Career Objective?

Your career objective is a personal statement defining the specifics you wish to attain via professional work.

1. It's **personal**: Others may share similar goals, but your objective should state your goals in terms that are comfortable to you.
2. It's a **commitment**: State a goal that identifies who you are and what you want to achieve.
3. It's **action-oriented**: Take control of your life by proactively communicating your skills and accomplishments to an employer.
4. It's **directional**: Focus on your future and identify steps to take and information to seek. Your focus can be short or long term. You will be better equipped to evaluate potential work situations by examining your future goals.
5. It's **specific**: Clearly identify facts about a work situation. Broad terms like "successful" or "challenging" may mean something to you, but convey no facts to an employer.

You also can choose to include your objective in your cover letter and not your resume. Regardless, a clear and focused objective helps you target your job search and communicate more effectively with potential employers.



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What Do I Include in a Career Objective?

Deciding what to include in a career objective can be difficult. The following pages cover elements you can include in your objective, but the elements you choose should accurately and concisely describe your goals.

1. Career Field

Career fields are general areas of work that include many different job titles but encompass similar work activities.

You may be considering several different job titles within a career field. Identifying the career field category allows you to specify a broad area in which you are interested without limiting yourself to specific job titles. While you may be interested in several career fields, it is better to limit yourself to one for purposes of the career objective.

Examples:

"To work in the healthcare field as an administrator in a service delivery unit."

"To research the field of law."

2. Position Title

Position title, occupational title, or job title is the name of a specific position one holds. While some organizations may have their own reference names, most position titles are generic and generalizable to many organizations.

Listing a position title on your career objective is appropriate if you know you will be applying for a specific position either in many different organizations or one targeted organization.

Examples:

"To obtain a position of accountant with a public accounting firm and eventually become a partner."

"To act as a community organizer where I can use my human relations, administrative, and research skills."



3. Organizational Category

Organizational category refers to settings in which you might like to work. In the broadest sense, organizations are categorized as either service-producing or goods-producing. More specifically, organizations are categorized by industry groups. One or more of these groups may appeal to you.

Identifying a category or industry group helps you identify specific employers within that group. Write your objective with a narrow focus and demonstrate interest in a specific setting without naming individual employers.

Examples:

"To work within the telecommunications industry as a technical advisor."

"To secure a position as an editor for a mid-size publishing firm."

4. Functional Area

Functional area refers to the structure of an organization. Most organizations are divided into various departments, each responsible for completion of specific tasks or functions. A large organization tends to be differentiated, meaning departments can have more specific functions. Smaller organizations may have the same department handling several functions.

Identifying a functional area in a career objective specifies which part of the organization would be of interest to you without narrowing yourself to a specific industry group or organizational category.

Examples:

"To work in the government relations area within a Fortune 500 organization."

"To obtain a management trainee position within the quality control unit of a production department."

5. Skills

Skills are special talents, functions (General Skills), or tasks (Specific Skills) that you have learned to do well. They are behaviors you exhibit and are most likely developed through academic, work, and leisure experiences. Some of these same skills might be used in one occupation or transferred to several different occupations (transferable skills).

Skills involve knowledge and physical behaviors that increase your marketability beyond specific career fields and organizational categories. Most jobs require a combination of skills. Identifying your combination lets the employer know where you might fit in the organization.

5a. General Skills

General skills are broad areas which encompass related specific skills. Identifying general skills in an objective establishes the combination of skill areas you prefer to use in your work.

Examples:

"To use my scientific and human relations skills as a Nursing Supervisor."

"To work for a government agency using my management and communication skills."

General skill areas you may want to use include:

| | | |
|----------------|-----------------|--------------|
| administrative | communication | mathematical |
| artistic | creative | mechanical |
| athletic | human relations | scientific |
| clerical | management | technical |

5b. Specific Skills

Specific skills are focused actions or behaviors used to perform tasks. Identifying specific skills in your career objective allows you to highlight your strengths or specializations within a general skill area.

Examples:

"To use my artistic skills especially doing layout, graphic design, and lettering for an advertising firm."

"To work for a rehabilitation agency and use my group and individual counseling skills."

View the included list to find skills that are commonly used in career objectives. Also consider your own specific skills when composing your objective.

What Skills are Commonly Used in Creating Career Objectives?

| | | |
|-------------|-------------|------------|
| account | draw | persuade |
| act | edit | photograph |
| administer | engineer | plan |
| advertise | entertain | play |
| advise | establish | predict |
| analyze | evaluate | prepare |
| appraise | exercise | present |
| arrange | exhibit | produce |
| assemble | experiment | program |
| assist | facilitate | promote |
| audit | formulate | propose |
| budget | furnish | provide |
| build | guide | publish |
| calculate | hire | purchase |
| catalogue | implement | qualify |
| chart | improve | raise |
| clarify | initiate | read |
| collect | influence | recommend |
| communicate | inspect | recruit |
| compete | install | repair |
| complete | instruct | report |
| compile | interpret | research |
| compose | interview | schedule |
| conduct | investigate | select |
| control | judge | sell |
| coordinate | landscape | serve |
| correct | lead | solve |
| counsel | make | staff |
| create | manage | start |
| dance | market | supervise |
| delegate | meet | synthesize |
| demonstrate | mobilize | teach |
| decide | model | test |
| design | motivate | train |
| determine | negotiate | translate |
| develop | operate | travel |
| diagnose | order | tutor |
| direct | organize | type |
| document | originate | verify |
| draft | perform | write |

6. Other Factors

There are other elements you can place in your career objective. These are important to identify and include limits, conditions, or personal criteria which would affect your work situation.

By establishing these factors, you can further focus on communicating your goals to employers. However, you may wish to limit the extent you detail these types of factors in your career objective. Being too narrowly focused may cause you to overlook potentially satisfying employment options.

Examples:

"To work outdoors in a supervisory capacity for the United States Forest Service."

"To obtain a secondary teaching position in the southeast United States."

"To work in law enforcement and pursue additional specialized training in forensics."

Other factors might include:

6a. Populations

Populations are the people with whom you work. They could be your colleagues, but generally, population as a career objective refers to the clients or customers of your products or services.

Examples:

"To work with elderly individuals in the field of recreational therapy."

"To design programs for children with disabilities."

6b. Goals

Short-term goals are goals you wish to achieve immediately. Identifying short-term goals helps you focus on where to begin your professional career. Also, they help you identify next steps in your job search.

Examples:

"To obtain an entry level position of Weather Observer."

Long-term goals are goals you wish to achieve in 5 to 10 years. Having long-term goals can be beneficial to you in two main ways:

1. Many organizations have staffing plans regarding where they want their employees to be in the organization in the future. By having a plan, you and the employer can evaluate if there is a match with respect to where you may start, advance, and finish in a given time period.

2. In our society, jobs are constantly changing. As you work, it is likely that opportunities and problems will occur. Long-term goals give you a yardstick to evaluate the situation and make decisions.

Example:

"To begin employment in a beverage management position which provides opportunities for advancement to a policy-making position in the organization."

How Do I Choose Among the Elements?

As you review the information included in the *Creating a Career Objective Guide*, think about the elements you wish to include in your own career objective. Keep in mind elements that may be useful in other job search activities, such as interviewing or negotiating offers.

For your written career objective, choose at least one element but no more than three or your objective may be too lengthy. You may want to have different career objectives for different career options you are considering. The key is to use elements that match your goals.

How Good is My Career Objective?

Career objectives can be:

- Personal
- Commitment-oriented
- Action-oriented
- Directional
- Specific

Brainstorm possible elements of your career objective. If you have difficulty writing your objective, drop in to the Career Center and ask a career advisor for help developing your objective.



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Alternative format available.
Revised 9/13.