



August 13, 2024

# Creating High-Quality Resumes

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**switchboard**  
connecting resettlement experts





# Today's Speaker



**Lauren Bowden**

Technical Advisor,  
Economic Empowerment

# Learning Objectives



By the end of this session, you will be able to:

1

## OPTIMIZE

standard components of a resume for hiring managers and ATS systems

2

## INTERPRET

international education and work experience into the combination resume format

3

## USE

resume templates, resume creation software, and AI tools to improve the efficiency and accuracy of the resume creation process



1

# Optimizing Resume Formatting

## and Components





# Disclaimer

- While a strong resume is an important component of any job search, the best predictor of success in the job market is the **ability to network.**



# Why do we optimize resumes?

## Three major reasons

- **75%** of resumes are never read by a human
- Hiring managers spend **6 to 7 seconds** looking at the average resume
- Resume and CV **conventions differ** wildly by country and industry

# slido



**What are some tactics you rely on to help clients' resumes stand out to hiring managers?**

# Resume Format Types

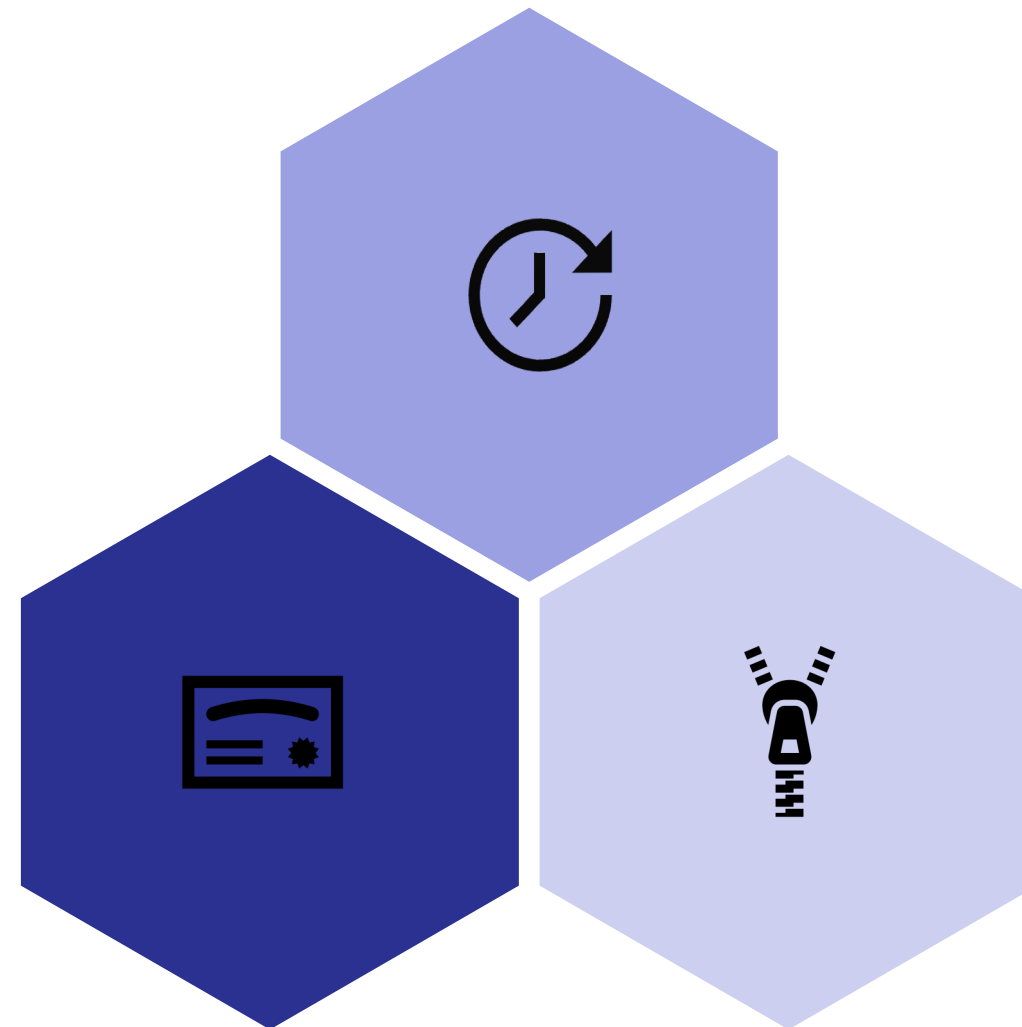


## Chronological

- Lists work experience in reverse chronological order
- Ideal for strong, consistent work history

## Functional

- Focuses on skills and qualifications
- Best for employment gaps or career changes



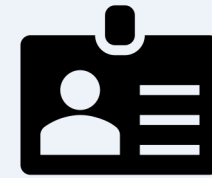
## Combination (hybrid)

- Blends skills with work history
- Suitable for diverse skill sets and solid work history





# Standard Components of a Resume



Name and contact information



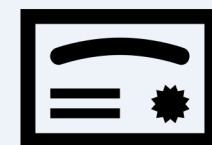
Professional summary



Experience



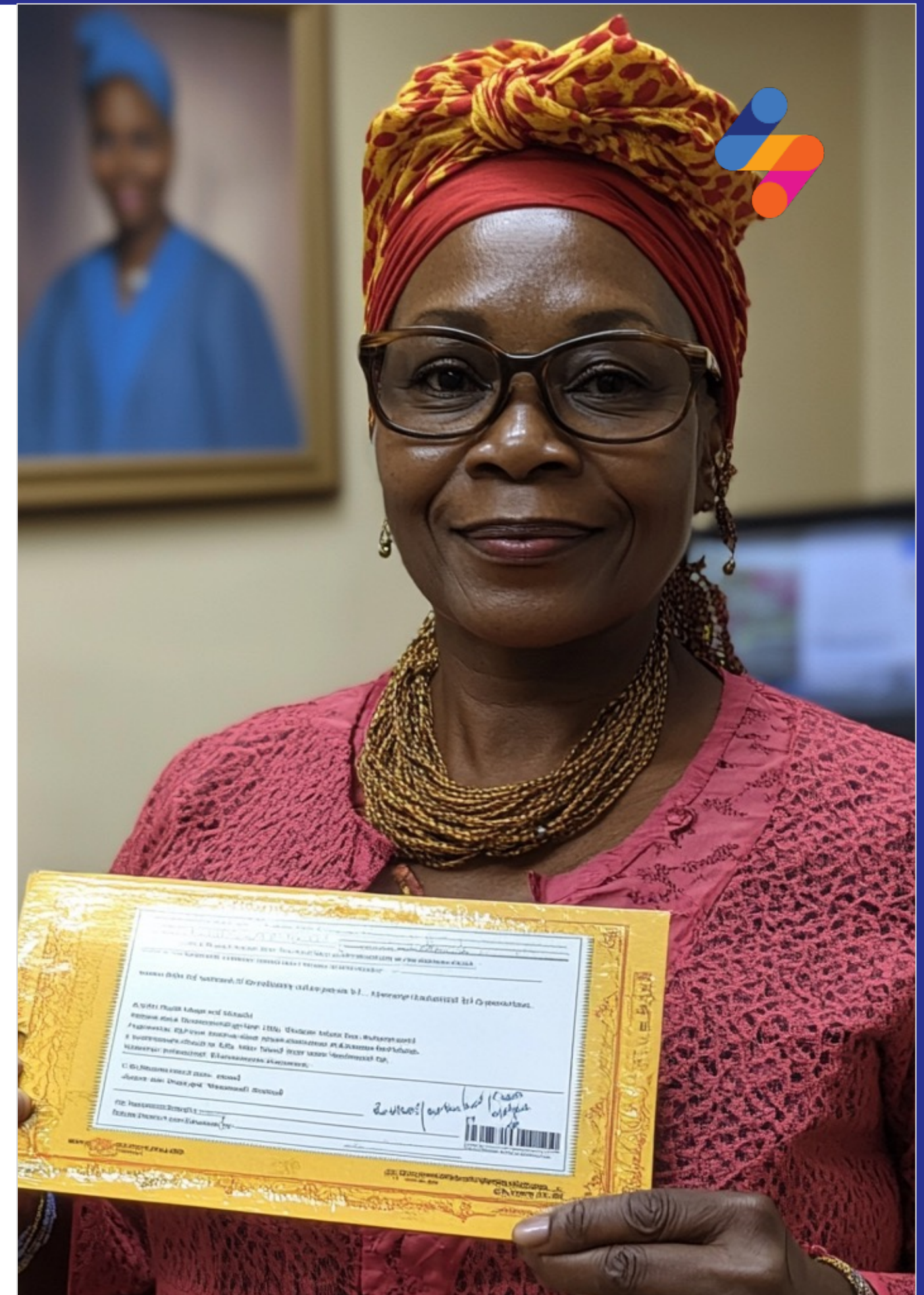
Education



Certifications, skills, interests

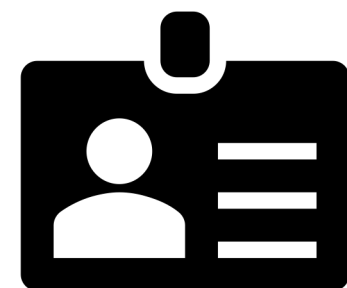
# Meet Olga Mutamba

- 46 years old and born in the DRC
- Former Nurse Childcare Worker and Head Cook
- Resettled in Atlanta and began working at Pilgrim's Pride Chicken Processing
- Recent graduate of Certified Medical Assistant program at Atlanta Technical College
- Looking for a MA jobs in children's healthcare





# Optimizing Name and Contact Information



- Offer city and state
- Avoid providing exact address
- Provide client phone number
- Use a professional email address, e.g., [JohnSmith@gmail.com](mailto:JohnSmith@gmail.com), **not** [JohntheSwan24@hotmail.com](mailto:JohntheSwan24@hotmail.com)
- Provide LinkedIn link or online portfolio as available

# Contact Information



Example

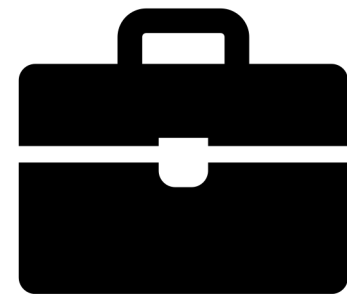
**Olga Mutamba**

OlgaMutamba@gmail.com ❖ (555) 555-5555 ❖ Atlanta, GA ❖ [LinkedIn](#)





# Optimizing a Professional Summary



- Condense the candidate's strongest selling point
- Provide the total length of relevant professional experience
- Avoid appealing to heartstrings or highlighting irrelevant experience

# Professional Summary

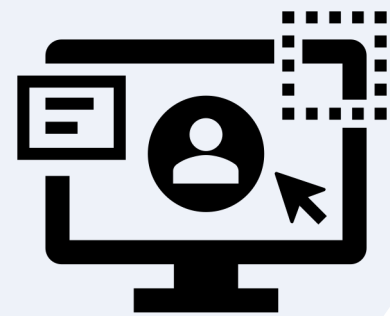


Example

**Dedicated nurse with over 9 years of experience in pediatric and community health care in the Democratic Republic of the Congo seeking to leverage an extensive background in health care in a medical assistant role in the United States. Aiming to utilize strong clinical skills and recent CMA certification to improve patient outcomes.**



# Optimizing Professional Experience



- Highlight most relevant, impressive accomplishments first
- Choose “relevant experience” section over “chronological experience” section
- Simplify bullet points for less relevant jobs
- Begin each bullet with an action verb that points the reader to the skill you want to highlight

# Professional Experience

## Example



### RELEVANT PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

#### **Kinshasa General Hospital**

*A leading hospital providing comprehensive healthcare services with over 500 beds.*

#### **Pediatric Nurse**

**March 2013 – February 2020**

*Kinshasa, DRC*

- Managed pediatric care for over 800 children annually, administering treatments, vaccinations, and conducting health assessments to ensure comprehensive healthcare delivery.
- Administered treatments, vaccinations, and provided emotional support to young patients and their families, enhancing patient and family satisfaction.
- Collaborated with pediatricians to develop care plans and managed acute and chronic illnesses, contributing to a 25% improvement in patient recovery rates.





# Optimizing Education



- Include trade school, vocational training, and degree programs
- For candidates without post-secondary coursework, list high school graduation date
- For candidates without formal education, delete this section

# Education

Example



## EDUCATION.

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**Atlanta Technical College**

*Medical Assistant Course*

**January 2024**

*Atlanta, GA*

**University of Kinshasa**

*State Recognized Diploma certified equivalent to U.S. BSN*

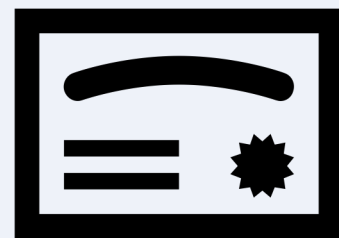
**February 2013**

*Kinshasa, DRC*

- 3.8 GPA with specialized coursework in Pediatric Care and Communicable Disease Management



# Optimizing Certifications, Skills, Interests



- In functional resumes, feature the skills section **before** professional experience section
- List exact skills mentioned in job description and all client languages
- Optional: Add non-controversial interests to appear more well-rounded

# Certifications, Skills, and Interests

## Example



### CERTIFICATIONS, SKILLS & INTERESTS

- **Certifications:** Certified Medical Assistant (CMA), Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA), Pediatric Advanced Life Support (PALS), Basic Life Support (BLS)
- **Skills:** Patient care and assessment, vaccination and medication administration, patient and family health education
- **Languages:** English, French, Swahili
- **Interests:** Kuba cloth weaving, hiking, community dance, language exchange



# Optimizing Resumes for Applicant Tracking Systems



**1 page**

**Word or PDF format**

**.5 to 1-inch margins**



**10–12 point font  
in Ariel, Cambria,  
Times New Roman,  
or Garamond**

**Embed keywords  
from job description**

**1 column**



2

# **Interpreting International Experience**

# Considerations When Interpreting International Experience



**All good resumes require the creator to interpret relevant experience to the target context**

**Presume the client has impressive, relevant experience, and find ways to frame it effectively for the target job market**

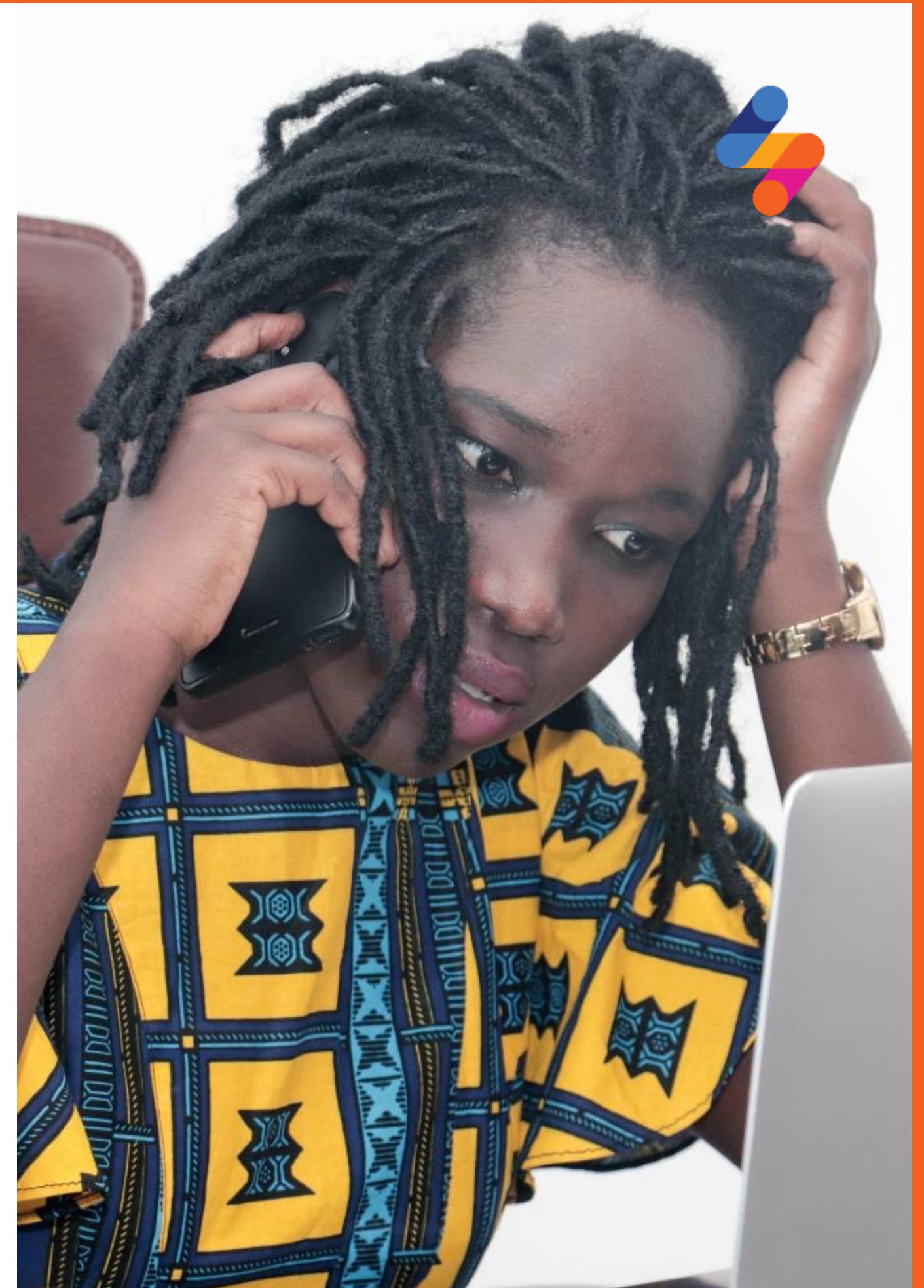


**In order to interpret client experience, prepare to ask a lot of questions.**

# Interpreting

## Foreign Companies

- Translate **company names** into English
- For large companies, offer a **one-sentence high-level description**, and describe the scope of their impact with numbers
- Use “**City, Country**” format when documenting the location of the company instead of “City, State”







# Interpreted Professional Experience

Example: Employer Description

## RELEVANT PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

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**Kinshasa General Hospital**

*A leading hospital providing comprehensive health care services with over 500 beds.*

**March 2013 – February 2020**

*Kinshasa, DRC*

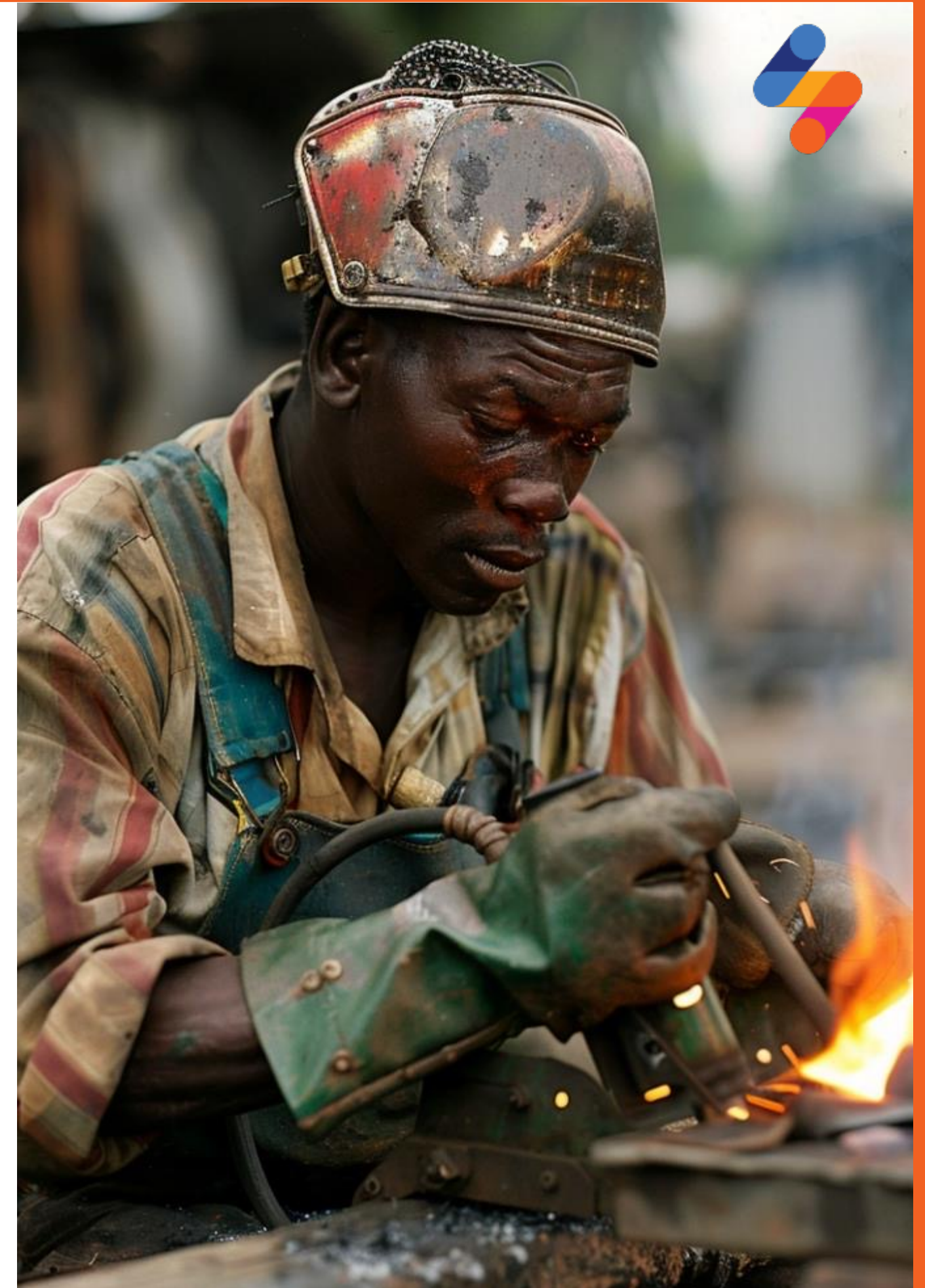
**Pediatric Nurse**

- Managed pediatric care for over 1,000 children annually, administering treatments and vaccinations, and conducting health assessments to ensure comprehensive health care delivery.
- Pioneered a support program that provided emotional and psychological assistance to children and their families, significantly reducing patient and family distress levels.
- Collaborated with pediatricians to develop care plans and managed acute and chronic illnesses, contributing to a 25% improvement in patient recovery rates.

# Interpreting

## Job Titles and Responsibilities

- Adapt job title to the **functional American equivalent**
- Rely on **job descriptions and example resumes** for specific professions to help client articulate past experience
- Rely on **metrics**



# Metrics in Client Resumes



Examples

**Number of people  
overseen**



**Percentage of  
change**



**Scale of operation**



**Number of  
transactions**



**Number of products**



**Size of workplace**







# Interpreted Professional Experience

## Example: Employer Description

### RELEVANT PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

---

#### **Kinshasa General Hospital**

*A leading hospital providing comprehensive health care services with over 500 beds.*

**March 2013 – February 2020**

*Kinshasa, DRC*

#### Pediatric Nurse

- Managed pediatric care for over 1,000 children annually, administering treatments and vaccinations, and conducting health assessments to ensure comprehensive health care delivery.
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- Collaborated with pediatricians to develop care plans and managed acute and chronic illnesses, contributing to a 25% improvement in patient recovery rates.



# Interpreting

Informal Work or Self Employment

- **All people** have skills and talents and have accomplished “work”
- Communicate **contributions to household labor, caretaking or unpaid support** to their community







# Interpreting Informal Work Example

**Example Job Title:** Homemaker/Home Manager

**Example Skillset Category:** Domestic Management and Organizational Skills

**Example Individual Skills and Activities:**

- Budget Management: Oversaw household budget, reducing expenses by 20% through strategic planning.
- Child Care and Education: Provided daily care and educational activities for three children, fostering a nurturing and stimulating environment.
- Meal Preparation: Planned and prepared nutritious meals for a family of five, ensuring dietary balance and variety.
- Community Engagement: Organized and participated in community events, increasing participation by 30%.



# Interpreting

## International Education Institutions

- If possible, opt for **credential evaluation**
- Briefly **explain the education system** if it's significantly different from the American system
  - E.g., “Completed a 5-year degree program in [Field], equivalent to a Bachelor’s and Master’s combined.”
- Highlight **relevant coursework**



# Interpreting Foreign Earned Education Example



## EDUCATION.

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Atlanta Technical College

*Medical Assistant Course*

January 2024

*Atlanta, GA*

University of Kinshasa

*State Recognized Diploma certified equivalent to U.S. BSN*

- 3.8 GPA with specialized coursework in Pediatric Care and Communicable Disease Management

February 2013

*Kinshasa, DRC*





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# **Using Tools, Templates, and AI to Improve Resumes**



# Benefits of Using Technology

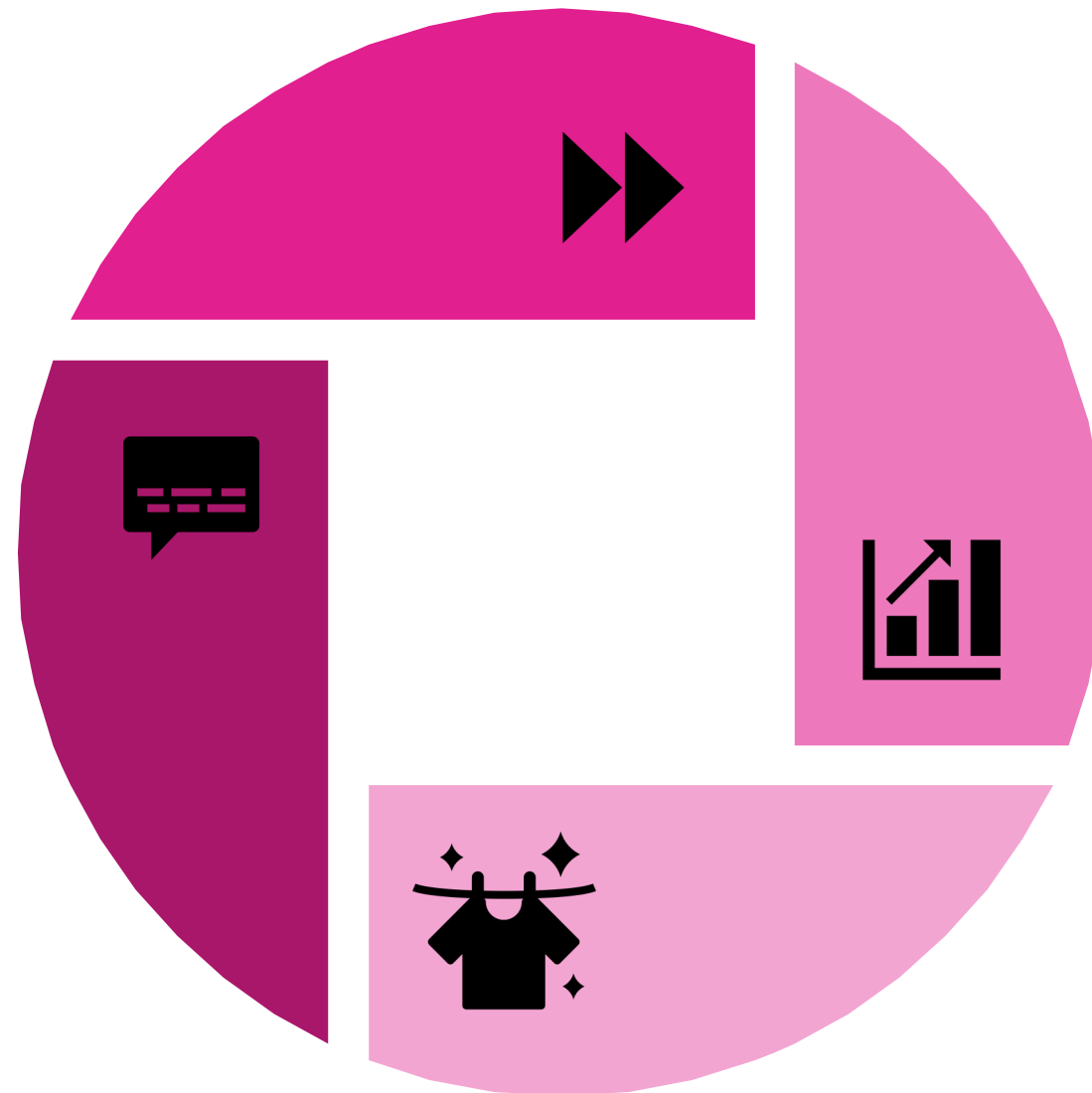
## In Resume Creation

### Efficiency

Streamlines the resume creation, editing, and tailoring process

### Language

Can assist ELL populations with articulating their previous experience and creating their own resumes



### Optimization

Allows for fast ATS optimization

### Polished Feel

Often allows for a more polished feel

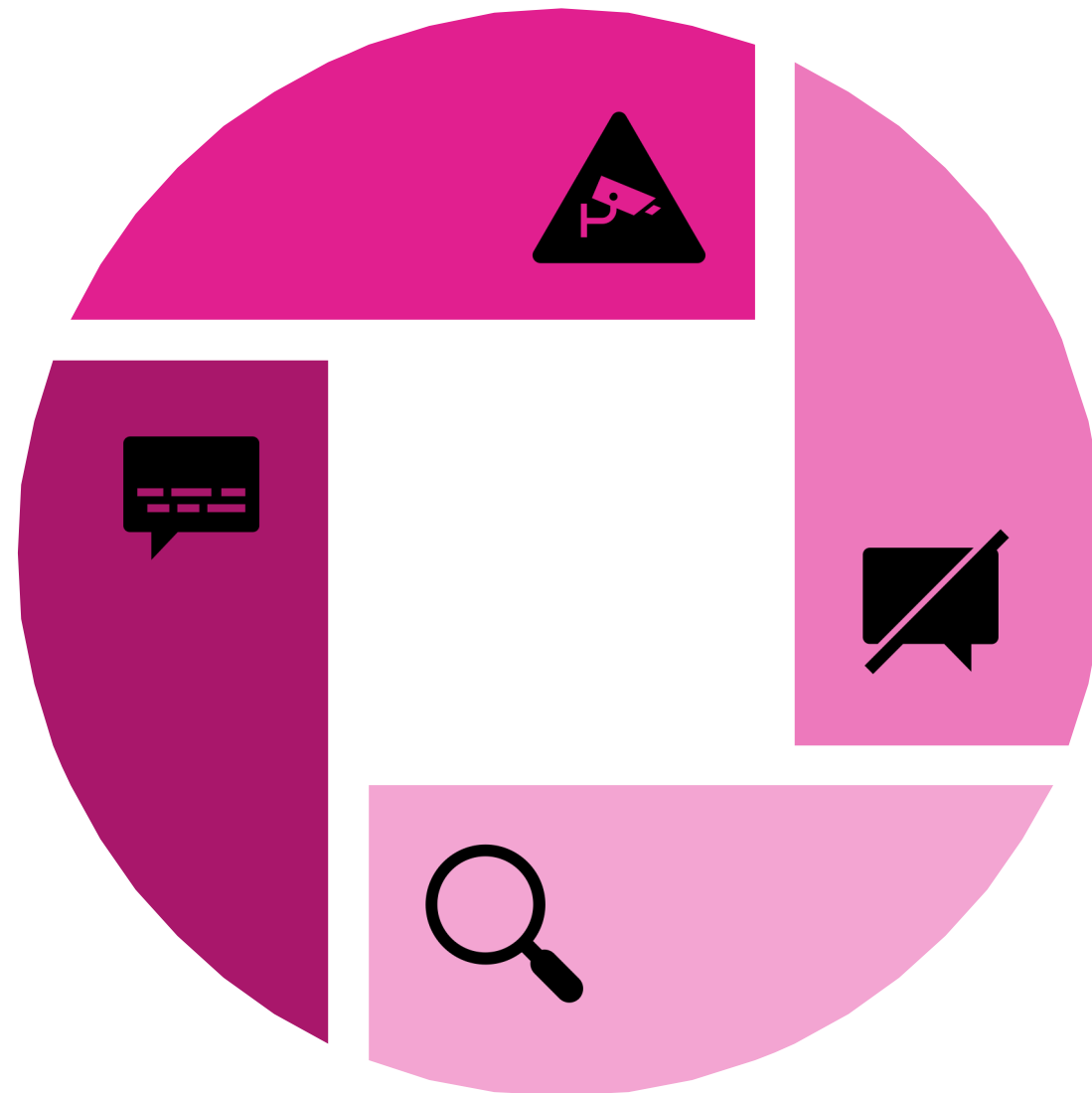


# Drawbacks of Using Technology

## In Resume Creation

### Privacy

Sharing personal identifiable information puts client at risk



### Generic Resumes

Can make resumes feel bland and impersonal

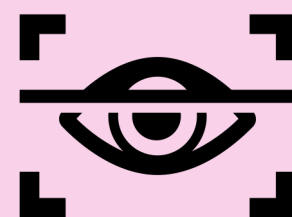
### Language Learning

AI-assisted resume creation may take away opportunity to practice language skills

### AI Detection Software

Leaving indications of AI assistance can hurt hiring chances

# Types of Resume Tools



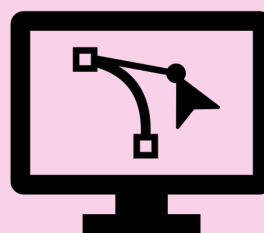
Resume scanners



Templates



Resume creation software



AI chatbots

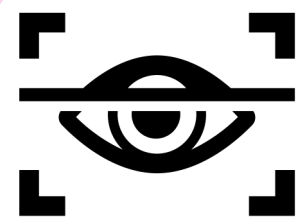




# Using Tools:

## Resume Scanners

- Provide keyword optimization by scanning resumes against job description
- Checks for optimization for ATS software
- Offers spelling and grammar checks
- Premium features are often locked behind a paywall





# Using Tools: Resume Templates

- Switchboard has a [downloadable, editable resume template](#)
- Match the template to the industry
- Avoid 2-column templates
- Rely on space-saving options over options with extra flourishes



## Job Seeker Name

firstnamelastname@gmail.com ❖ (555) 555-5555 ❖ U.S. City, State ❖ LinkedIn Link

### PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

Write one sentence summarizing the candidate's professional history, including years of transferable professional experience and any relevant education, skills, or certifications. For job seekers who have never worked in the U.S. or who are looking to make a dramatic career shift, add a second sentence that summarizes the candidate's objective.

**RELEVANT PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE** (Add the most relevant, impressive experience first. For candidates without traditional work experience, consider recording volunteer or homemaker experience, and remove the word "RELEVANT" from the title as needed.)

**Company Name** (Translate the company name into English as necessary.)

Use this space to write a one sentence high-level description of the company. Describe the scope of their operations and impact with numbers. Repeat for companies below if space allows.

Job Title

Month Year – Month Year

City, State or City, Country

- Core responsibility #1. Dedicate this space to describing the candidate's contribution to the company using metrics. For example, if the candidate was a mechanic, you could write "Serviced and repaired the electrical, heating, cooling, and engine systems in 1500+ vehicles. (Presume the hiring manager has stopped reading here.)
  - You can use sub-bullets as necessary for more detail, such as key performance stats.
- Core responsibility #2. Write a second bullet that details a technical skill or competency relevant to the target position.
- Core responsibility #3. Add another technical skill/competency or conclude with a special project/accomplishment.

**Company Name**

Job Title

Month Year – Month Year

City, State or City, Country

- Core responsibility #1. The first bullet should summarize the candidate's role and quantify their accomplishments.
- Core responsibility #2. Use bullets to showcase achievements that go beyond what is expected for this job title.
- Core responsibility #3. Do not write more than 3 bullets here or in any additional professional experience sections.

### ADDITIONAL PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

**Company Name** (Translate the company name into English as necessary.)

Job Title

Month Year – Month Year

City, State or City, Country

- Core responsibility #1. For past jobs with zero relevance, you can save space by using only one bullet.

**EDUCATION** (Include trade school, vocational training, and degree programs. For candidates without post-secondary coursework, list high school graduation. For candidates without formal education, delete this section.)

**School Name**

Degree (e.g., BS), Majors (e.g., Computer Science)

List candidate honors, e.g., *summa cum laude* or Economics Honors Society. List a GPA if it is over 3.5.

- Add color to a candidate by listing sports or social clubs. Do not add political or religious affiliations here or elsewhere.

Graduation Month Year

City, State or City, Country

**CERTIFICATIONS, SKILLS & INTERESTS** (You can put CERTIFICATIONS, SKILLS & INTERESTS first if the candidate is transitioning to a new sector.)

- **Certifications:** If the candidate has relevant certifications, list them. If not, delete this bullet and delete "CERTIFICATIONS" above.
- **Skills:** Add in skills relevant to the target job description. Try to use the skills language listed in the job description.
- **Languages:** Add any languages that the client can speak, including English.
- **Interests:** Interests allow the hiring manager an opportunity to build rapport with a candidate. Include non-controversial interests like forms of exercise or recreation and any unique or interesting hobbies.

\* All resumes should be one page unless the candidate has more than 10 years of relevant experience.



# Using Tools:

## Resume Creation Software

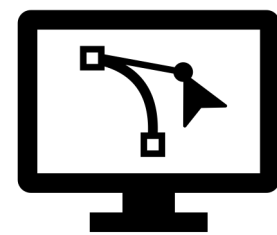


- Use the software's **formatting tools** to emphasize important accomplishments and generate potential bullet points
- Use the **preview feature** to see how the resume looks before finalizing
- Provide client with a Word version **and** a PDF version



# Using Tools:

## AI Chatbots



- Generate professional summaries, potential bullet points, and accompanying cover letters
- Articulate how skills or experience earned in one context translates into another
- Scan for potential spelling or grammatical errors
- Provide general suggestions on how resume could be improved

# Potential Prompts

AI chatbot



Read this job description and this resume and tell me which skills or keywords are missing from the resume.

Give me 10 job responsibilities that an Iraqi interpreter who worked alongside the U.S. army might have had. Make sure to include potential metrics.

How does a job as a teacher in Honduras prepare someone to work at a food manufacturer in the United States?





**Questions?**

Type your question in the **Q&A** 



# Learning Objectives



We hope you are now able to:

1

## OPTIMIZE

standard components of a resume for hiring managers and ATS systems

2

## INTERPRET

international education and work experience into the combination resume format

3

## USE

resume templates, resume creation software, and AI tools to improve the efficiency and accuracy of the resume creation process

# Recommended Resources



## Switchboard

- **Blog Post:** [Resume Building for First-Time Jobseekers: Tips for Service Providers](#) (2024)
- **Tool/Template:** [Creating High-Quality Newcomer Resumes: Template and Sample](#) (2024)
- **Blog Post:** [Answering FAQs on Creating Effective Newcomer Resumes and Using Switchboard's Resume Template](#) (2024)
- **Webinar:** [Establishing and Maintaining Employer Partnerships](#) (2023)
- **Guide:** [Establishing and Maintaining Employer Partnerships](#) (2023)
- **Tool:** [Contacting Potential Employer Partners: Phone and Email Templates](#) (2023)





# Stay Connected



**Switchboard@Rescue.org**



**@SwitchboardTA**



**www.SwitchboardTA.org**



**@SwitchboardTA**

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