

MBA “Tommy Trojan” Résumé Guidelines

These guidelines have been prepared for all USC Marshall MBA students.

The Tommy Trojan Résumé: Introduction and Format

Graduate Career Services requires a specific résumé format to ensure consistent quality, Marshall branding, and ease of reading for the recruiter.

The Tommy Trojan résumé format is what you will use to participate in recruiting activities at USC Marshall.

In this guide, we describe the specific requirements of the format to assist you in developing relevant content for your résumé.

Your résumé is a critical marketing tool designed to sell your strengths and accomplishments to a targeted reader. The easy-to-read format and content standards position the reader to focus on your credentials without distraction.

Remember, all information within your résumé (and in all communications with employers) should be truthful and accurate.

Resume Assessment

	Competitive	Average	Needs Improvement
Appearance			
Resume Guidelines	Consistent throughout document		Inconsistent
Errors	None		One or more
First Impression/Visual Appeal	Polished presentation	Visually acceptable	Visually unacceptable
Design Elements	Appropriate and consistent	Minimally inconsistent	Distracting
Résumé Sections			
Contact Information	Accurate, complete, polished	Accurate and complete	Missing key element
	Follows guidelines specific to contact information		Does not follow specific guidelines
Education	Includes all key elements		Missing key information
	Appropriate for educational background		Not consistent with educational background
Experience	Effective use of action verbs	Some use of action verbs	Ineffective use of action verbs
	Quantified results	Some results included	Not results oriented
	Appropriate use of industry-specific language	Limited or unclear use of industry-specific language	No use of industry language
	Follows guidelines specific to experience		Does not follow specific guidelines
Activities/Honors	Leadership and accomplishments identified	Leadership identified	Shows position/membership only
	Follows guidelines specific to activities		Does not follow specific guidelines
Language (optional)	Reflects fluency level		Reflects language without fluency level
	Successfully meets Marshall Standards		Does not meet minimum standards – Recommend another review

Format Guidelines:

- **Reverse Chronological Order**

List educational and business experience in reverse chronological order—most recent first.

- **Length**

A one-page resume, 8.5" x 11", is preferred.

- **Margins**

Top and bottom margins may range from .5" to 1". Left and right margins should be the same size, between .75" to 1".

- **Bullets**

List bullets vertically with each bullet indented as shown in the resume template. Use only a solid bullet (●).

- **Font**

Use 10 - 12 point, Times New Roman font throughout the résumé. Do not alternate other font styles.

- **Typography**

Use plain type unless specified. Use italics only for newspapers, magazines and words in foreign languages, e.g. *magna cum laude*.

- **Capitalization**

Capitalize a word if it is a proper name: i.e., the name of a major, a title, or a department. Examples: Bachelor of Science in Accounting, Finance Director, Financial Analysis Department.

- **Abbreviations**

Abbreviate states (CA in place of California) except in your bullet points (e.g. Sales responsibility in Texas, not TX).

- Spell out names of countries.

- Capitalize languages (Spanish, French)

- Spell out months and address words such as Street or Road. Spell out degrees such as Master of Business Administration.

- Abbreviate or use acronyms only if they are more appropriate than using the full name, i.e.: IBM not International Business Machines, 3M not Minnesota Mining and Manufacturing.

- **Subject Headings**

Use bold, underlined and capital letters. Place subject headings along the left margin. Use the following headings:

EDUCATION, EXPERIENCE, SKILLS AND INTERESTS.

- **Dates**

Dates are right-justified using the right tab function, bolded, and indicate years only (no months) in reverse chronological order. Indicate years using a medium dash and four digits: 2014 – 2016, rather than 2014 – 16. For internships or other seasonal work, the following are acceptable: Summer 20XX, Fall 20XX, or Spring 20XX.

- **Locations**

List the city and state following school and organization names, inserting a medium dash to separate the school or employer and location. A medium dash is the one used above under Dates; in Word you find it by clicking on Insert and then Symbol.

- **School and Company Names**

Bold text in lower case, but capitalizing the first letter.

- **Optional: Brief Description of Employer**

If the company name is *not recognizable* to the reader (i.e. tech firm or start-up; small company), it is acceptable to add a brief description of the employer, put on the line(s) directly below employer name. Be brief, one line is preferred but no more than 2-3 lines.

- **Position Titles**

Italicize titles in lower and upper case. Place directly under the company name. If you worked in multiple roles for the same company, show the total length of employment with that company across from the company name. For each role, list the individual date range in parentheses, italicized, for the period you worked in that capacity. *(2014 – 2016)*

You may include a blank line between your various positions; however, if space is limited, you may eliminate the line.

- **Punctuation**

Do not use periods at the end of bullets unless they are multiple-sentence bullets. However, whether or not you use periods, **be consistent** with punctuation throughout the entire résumé.

- **Numbers**

To be grammatically correct, all numbers below 10 should be spelled out. However, you may choose to use the actual number even if below 10 as it will pop out more. Know your audience – if grammar is important, spell out the numbers.

- **Use of Jargon**

Insert words that are relevant to the field you are targeting. Speak the employer’s language: “dissect” the job description or review resumes from a similar industry to identify the appropriate jargon for any given function or industry.

- **Using the Template**

Copy and paste your information over the text in the Tommy Trojan template. This ensures proper spacing, font size and formatting.

- **Converting Formats**

Whenever you upload your resume to a system that converts your document to a PDF file, always view the converted document to double check formatting.

Frequently Asked Question

What if the resume won’t fit on one page?

- Minimize top and bottom font to 0.5”. Test a smaller font size for section headers and body text (but not less than 10 point). Continue to use a single blank line between sections.
- Remove phrases listed under your experiences that do not relate to the types of jobs you will be seeking.
- Remove activities or honors that are older than four years or do not represent applicable skills or interests.

STAR Method:

When writing your resume, use the STAR method for developing strong statements that describe your past and present experiences. Avoid listing only job duties. Instead, describe accomplishments and outcomes. Recruiters and hiring managers prefer to read success stories, not a list of tasks.

For example:

Situation – the situation or setting; the background for context

Task – tasks or tactics used to approach or assess the challenge

Action – activities or actions used to effect the change

Result – the outcome, a sense of scale, the quantifiable benefit

A **weak** resume statement:

“A successful builder of high-performance teams that can address challenging client situations.”

You have just “bragged” on yourself without a context, an example, or any sense of scale or success. Convert it into a STAR statement...

A **strong** resume statement:

“Assigned as a new project leader to a client dissatisfied with the firm’s services, rebuilt the project team and rewrote the application to the customer’s satisfaction, resulting in an extension of the multiyear contract.”

Broken down into STAR components:

Situation: assigned to a dissatisfied customer

Task: to solve a technical issue (application programming) and a client issue

Action: pulled together a good team to solve the technical issue

Result: achieved customer satisfaction and got a contract extension

For each bullet point, remember to ask yourself three important questions:

- Is this bullet point relevant to my target audience?
- Is it detailed enough that I’ve differentiated myself from others?
- Is it results-oriented? Who benefitted? How? And by how much?

THOMAS (TOMMY) TROJAN

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EDUCATION

University of Southern California, Marshall School of Business – Los Angeles, CA **May 2018**

Master of Business Administration; Certificate in Business Analytics

- *Honors:* Dean’s Honor List; GPA 3.7
- *Membership:* Graduate Marketing Association

Washington University – St. Louis, MO **May 2013**

Bachelor of Arts, Economics; Minor: Business

- *Honors:* Dean’s Honor List; GPA 3.8

EXPERIENCE

ABC Company, Inc. (a division of XYZ, Inc.) – San Francisco, CA **Summer 2017**

Product Marketing Intern

- Co-managed \$1M in nationwide marketing activities for an industry leading 3D animation software company.
- Researched competitive landscape and devised a marketing plan used to aggressively target a new industry segment.
- Led co-marketing programs including customer testimonials, product demonstrations, event planning and giveaways at industry tradeshows in support of new product launches; achieved 100% of launch goals.
- Surveyed over 50,000 customers online gathering usage intelligence used in developing product roadmaps.

HearMe Communications – San Francisco, CA **2013 – 2016**

Internet Partnership Manager (2014 – 2016)

- Researched and developed over 40 strategic marketing partnerships for a \$3B global DSL provider.
- Negotiated deal terms of online marketing and advertising relationships and drove contract process for 20 partners per quarter by collaborating with internal/external legal departments.
- Co-defined and fine-tuned affiliate e-commerce marketing program that effectively drove product sales at a low cost per acquisition. Created all initial sales tools and materials in support of this new channel.
- Analyzed and reported monthly results of 15 - 20 partnerships used for campaign optimization purposes.

Telemarketing Campaign Manager (2013 – 2014)

- Researched and selected an outsourced telemarketing agency to handle all incoming end-user ‘Help-desk’ calls for HearMe’s Broadband Information Center resulting in a \$30K monthly marketing spend, 20% below budget.
- Managed vendor relationships and end-to-end implementation of telemarketing program - including systems design, reporting requirements, and training for the selected agency.
- Coordinated all inbound/outbound telemarketing campaigns for DSL lead generation, special event registration, and sales promotions resulting in a 10x growth in daily call volume within less than one year.
- Designed and implemented performance measurement databases, training materials, and bonus structures.

SKILLS AND INTERESTS

- *Computer:* Oracle Applications: Order Entry, Inventory, Nielsen Ratings tools, Media Metrix
- *Interests:* Running (L.A. Marathons), Kick Boxing, and Trojan Football

Details by Section

1. PERSONAL CONTACT INFORMATION

Center your heading at the top of the résumé and include your complete formal name, street address, city, state, zip code, phone number (only one) and email address (hyperlink is optional). Your name is bolded and appears in all capitals. If you use a nickname, or are international and use an English name, add it in parentheses. Use your current address and a phone number where you are most reachable.

THOMAS (TOMMY) TROJAN

XXX Circle Drive, Apt. # xx, Any City, CA 900XX · (314) XXX-XXXX · firstname.lastname.2019@marshall.usc.edu

The line under your name is created using the Border function in Word and is 1.5 pts Bottom Border.

In some instances, you may opt to omit your address, or simply indicate Los Angeles, CA.

Do not include personal information such as salary, age, marital status, health, etc., in a U.S. résumé. In some countries, this information is desirable. If you are writing a résumé for a market outside the U.S., consult with an international career advisor for guidance.

2. EDUCATION

Present education in reverse chronological order. Begin with the school name in bold and in lower case with first letter capitalized. Next, list the degree in italics and date of graduation (Month 20XX) in plain font. On the following line, bullet your honors, memberships, leadership roles, activities, experiential programs, and awards and italicize the headings. Use three to five lines for each educational experience, more if the information is notable. Use italics for words in other languages, (e.g. *magna cum laude*), newspapers and magazines. Leave a blank line between educational institutions.

To list your certificates, concentration and/or an emphasis, follow the suggested format in the résumé template. We recommend indicating your certificate or concentration following a semi-colon after the degree. Include educational programs only if you obtained a degree. If space permits in this section, include significant honors, scholarships, awards, selections and positions of leadership. Experiential programs (such as practicums) may be listed under Education or Experience. Use achievement-oriented phrases beginning with action words.

University of Southern California, Marshall School of Business – Los Angeles, CA

May 2018

Master of Business Administration

- *Honors:* Dean's Honor List; GPA 3.7
- *Membership:* Graduate Marketing Association

3. EXPERIENCE

List professional experience in reverse chronological order with most recent experience first. The company name should be in lower and upper case, bold and left justified, followed by a medium dash and the city/state. For international locations, spell out both city and country. The years of employment at each company should be at the right margin.

ABC Company, Inc. (a division of XYZ, Inc.) – San Francisco, CA

Summer 2017

Product Marketing Intern

Under the company name, you have the option to list a brief description of the employer. This description is particularly helpful if the name of the company is not widely recognized or further clarification is needed (e.g., company name change due to a merger/acquisition). List the title of your most recent (or only) position at that company in italics only.

If you held multiple positions at the same company, put the actual dates for each specific position in parentheses and italics following the job title, using years only. You may include a blank line to separate multiple positions with the same company; however, you may omit this line if space is limited. Accurately represent your role, title or level. Use indented bullet points to describe your accomplishments and responsibilities in each position.

HearMe Communications – San Francisco, CA

2013 – 2016

Internet Partnership Manager (2014 – 2016)

- Bullet 1
- Bullet 2

Telemarketing Campaign Manager (2013 – 2014)

- Bullet 1
- Bullet 2

List all full- and part-time, civilian and/or military work experience. You may add volunteer work if it is substantial. A bullet in the SKILL AND INTERESTS section showing volunteer work is also appropriate. For military experience, translate your experience into business terminology such as budgeting, training, leadership, development and supervision and management of complex projects.

4. SKILLS AND INTERESTS

These sections allow for supplemental information that describes your accomplishments and contributions in a variety of areas. Include information that clearly contributes to your work ability for your current career goals. Pick and choose among the categories. Limit the number of sub-categories to a maximum of five.

Sample sub-headers:

- Bullet and list sub-heading in italics, not bolded (see examples below)
- *Affiliations*: only list affiliations with professional organizations.
(American Marketing Association, Public Relations Society of America)
- *Accreditations/Certifications*: Certified Public Accountant
- *Community Service*: Habitat for Humanity
- *Computer*: Sun Certified Programmer for the Java 2 Platform
(it is not recommended to include Word, Excel, Power Point, etc., only higher level computer skills.)
- *Language*: Mandarin: native; Spanish: proficient; French: basic.
(Use these levels to indicate your proficiency: native, proficient, conversant, basic.)
- *Work Authorization*: Authorized to work in the U.S. on a permanent basis
(Use if you are not a U.S. citizen and have permanent US work authorization, or to note work authorization in other countries, if appropriate.)
- *Awards/Honors*: Omicron Delta Kappa, Military Awards, Outstanding Community Service Award
- *Publications*: "Candy Wars: A Qualitative Study of Chocolate Consumption in the U.S.," Academy of Marketing Science Review
- *Interests*: include outside interests if they demonstrate leadership, commitment, tenacity, excellence, etc. Often listing your interests creates an opportunity to relating to the recruiter or for small talk at the beginning of the interview.
- Test Scores are optional. You may include high test scores (GMAT scores ≥ 700 are generally perceived as being "high")

Style

1. ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Begin bullet statements with action verbs in order to compel the reader to understand your accomplishments. Use the past tense unless you are presenting a current job. Omit “I,” “me,” and “my.” Limit the use of articles like “the,” “a,” “an.” Resume bullets should be concise, business-like, crisp fragments, rather than complete sentences, e.g.: “Calculated competitive market salaries for client companies.”

Describe accomplishments in brief, results-oriented statements. Follow the STAR pattern. In noting accomplishments, consider the question “So what?” for transferable skills and use buzzwords for the industry and target position, if appropriate.

Avoid using words and phrases such as “Responsible for,” or “Assisted.” Ideal verbs are those that convey both action and results, e.g.: reduced, gained, advanced, expanded, saved, improved, and increased.

When possible, quantify your accomplishments using numbers, dollar values or percentages. Some examples are: “Increased revenues by \$50,000 in one-year period,” “Sold 300 widgets in five months,” and “Reduced costs by 25%.”

If it is not possible to use absolute numbers or percentages, provide a sense for the scope of your accomplishment, as in: “Established first marketing plan to be used by company,” “Revolutionized quality monitoring process by...” and “Maintained successful customer relationships with bank’s top clients.” Limit the use of modifiers such as: “successfully” and “effectively.”

Examples of Accomplishment Areas:

- Improved: quality, productivity
- Reduced: costs, time
- Planned: designed program for training process to improve, reduce, change
- Decreased: turnover, failure, breakdown, shrinkage, overtime

Examples of Accomplishment Statements:

- Spreadsheet cost reduction initiative which reduced labor costs by 18% and material waste by 42%.
- Designed and implemented new promotional point of sale displays which stopped share loss and increased market share by 25% in one year.

Examples of Areas to Quantify:

- Sales or sales quota
- Customer satisfaction
- Costs and profits
- Number of people managed or Number of clients served
- Market share
- Rankings, efficiencies, potential for savings

ACTION VERBS

These action verbs will help you develop a compelling description of your experience.

Planning Skills

Conceived	Formulated	Projected
Created	Initiated	Reorganized
Designed	Innovated	Revised
Developed	Instituted	Scheduled
Devised	Invented	Solved
Engineered	Justified	Systemized
Established	Laid out	Tailored
Estimated	Organized	Transformed
Experimented	Originated	
Formed	Planned	

Directing Employees

Administered	Determined	Ordered
Approved	Directed	Prescribed
Authorized	Guided	Regulated
Conducted	Headed	Specified
Controlled	Instructed	Supervised
Decided	Led	Trained
Delegated	Managed	

Assuming Responsibility

Accepted	Described	Maintained
Achieved	Developed	Made
Adopted	Doubled	Overcome
Arranged	Established	Performed
Assembled	Evaluated	Prepared
Assumed	Experienced	Received
Attended	Gathered	Reduced
Audited	Halted	Reviewed
Built	Handled	Simplified
Checked	Improved	Sold
Classified	Implemented	Transacted
Collected	Initiated	Tripled
Compiled	Installed	Used
Constructed	Integrated	Utilized

Providing Effective Service

Carried out	Explained	Provided
Committed	Facilitated	Purchased
Delivered	Furnished	Rewrote
Demonstrated	Generated	Sent Serviced
Earned	Inspected	Submitted
Exchanged	Installed	Transmitted
Expanded	Issued	Wrote
Expedited	Procured	

Interpersonal Service

Advised	Coordinated	Negotiated
Aided	Counseled	Participated
Apprised	Helped	Promoted
Clarified	Informed	Recommended
Conferred	Inspired	Represented
Consulted	Interpreted	Resolved
Contributed	Interviewed	Suggested
Cooperated	Mediated	Unified

Investigative and Analytical Skills

Analyzed	Evaluated	Reviewed
Assessed	Familiarized	Searched
Calculated	Investigated	Studied
Computed	Observed	Verified
Correlated	Proved	
Discovered	Researched	

Tips for 2nd year MBA's – Updating Your Résumé to Include Your Internship

Organizing a one-page résumé to give space for an internship requires you to think strategically about your experience to determine what to include and what to eliminate. Choose bullets from your past experience, education, and extracurricular activities that continue to support your post-MBA job search goal.

If your resume is already full at one page, remove older, historical content to make room for the most current experience, your internship. Include your internship with several results-oriented bullets that represent your contributions.