

## Importance of a Qualifications Summary

Modern, best practices-based résumés open with qualifications summaries. Unlike résumés from 10+ years ago, which opened with objective statements, today's résumés use summaries to, well, “summarize” the candidate's candidacy and provide résumé screeners with the information they need to know in their ever so brief scan (recent estimates have suggested the résumé screening process to be as little as 4-to-7 seconds long).

### Why not an Objective Statement?

Objective statements are archaic in nature as they focus on what the candidate wants. In today's employer-centric market, hiring managers—at least during the initial screening process—do not have time to think about what they can do for a candidate, or how they can help a candidate in achieving his or her goals, and instead have to spend their limited time deciding if the candidate possesses the skills and experiences to warrant further interest.

### What does an objective statement look like?

Typically an objective statement communicates what the candidate is seeking or what they intend to find in a position of interest. Examples include:

#### **Objective**

Obtain a challenging and rewarding position within the field of aviation that emphasizes my skills in aviation management, leadership and an overall understanding of the aviation field.

#### **OBJECTIVE**

To further my interior design experience by expanding into the commercial field; utilizing the skills I have developed in design, client relations, and project management.

As mentioned above, the screening process is focused on looking for keywords to validate that the candidate does indeed possess the skills, experiences, credentials, and other key qualifiers to make them a viable candidate for the job.

To facilitate this screening process, qualifications summaries emerged as a way for hiring managers to collect the important data they needed to make quick decisions on a candidate's viability. Instead of spending screening time reading what had become overly self-serving objective statements, the hiring community demanded a way to evaluate candidates quicker and more effectively. Hence the qualifications summary was born.

### What does a Qualifications Summary look like?

A qualifications summary should serve as an executive summary of the candidate's qualifications, therefore essentially a summary of the résumé itself. Summaries can come in all shapes and sizes but typically, at a minimum, would include a brief paragraph overview of the candidate and his or her qualifications. Summaries may also include elements such as professional titles, taglines, paragraph or bulleted overviews, and core skills lists, all dependant on how the candidate is positioning him or herself on paper.

Take a look at a few examples of qualifications summaries:

*For a Project Management & Business Analysis Candidate:*

Displayed keen analytical and critical thinking acumen while developing long-range financial projections, effectively managing all phases of project lifecycles, and executing high-profile scientific research studies. Strengths in contract analysis, administration, and SLA compliance, working with internal and external stakeholders to drive achievement of project deliverables. Identify, isolate, and rectify issues—process, project, or staff related—with the potential to impact performance. Collaborative individual contributor and team leader.

**Strengths include:**

- Financial, Business, & System Analysis
- Quantitative & Qualitative Analysis
- Research & Data Collection
- Statistical Analysis
- SOP Development & Documentation
- Advanced Technology Proficiency
- Training & Team Development
- Conversational Spanish

*For a Sales Candidate:*

**BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT : RELATIONSHIP CULTIVATION**

- Proven to build alliances, forge solid relationships, and generate top-ranked sales results by differentiating offerings, promoting value-added partnerships, and serving as a subject matter expert in highly competitive and saturated arenas.
- Produce leading market share gains in new and established territories, demonstrating keen sales cycle management, prospecting, pipeline management, and brand-building skills, coupled with a solutions-based sales approach.
- Polished communicator, presenter, and educator, called on to deliver highly technical and clinical seminars for internal and external stakeholders. Repeatedly tapped to represent companies during regional and national conferences.

*New Product Launch  
Competitive Positioning  
Trend & Market Analysis  
Contracts & Negotiations  
Client Education Programs  
Avid Community Involvement  
MS Office & CRM Applications  
Networking & Relationship Building*

*For a Senior-Level Human Resources Professional:*

<b>Fortune 100 Experience &amp; Exposure to Diverse Total Rewards Environments</b>	<b>SENIOR LEADER</b> – HUMAN RESOURCES, BENEFITS, COMPENSATION & VENDOR MANAGEMENT –	<b>Published Author, Experienced Instructor, &amp; Subject Matter Expert</b>
<p><i>Strategic Planning &amp; Change Leadership</i></p> <p><i>Vendor Review, Analysis, Monitoring, Selection, &amp; Management</i></p> <p><i>Compensation &amp; Benefits Planning &amp; Administration</i></p> <p><i>International Team Leadership</i></p> <p><i>HRIS Selection &amp; Administration</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <b>Consultative business partner</b> with proven experience designing, deploying, and administering robust benefits environments—401(k), pension, voluntary benefits, and compensation—and delivery models for as many as 150,000 participants.</li> <li>■ <b>Optimized the performance of benefit plans</b>—totaling \$7B+ in assets—through oversight of third-party vendors, monitoring of service level agreements, and successful deployment of performance improvement and cost containment initiatives.</li> <li>■ <b>Relationship developer skilled in selecting and deploying partnerships</b> to not only generate multimillion-dollar cost savings, but create attractive benefits packages. Initiated and maintained select vendor relationships since infancy of career.</li> </ul>	

For a Brand Manager:

BRAND MANAGER – ONLINE PRODUCTS	
<i>Marketing Planning &amp; Integration</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Savvy brand and product manager with 10+ years' experience leading marketing and sales programs, cultivating relationships, and increasing market penetration through client acquisition, account development, and initiation of strategic industry partnerships.</li><li>▪ Proven strengths in establishing direction for product development initiatives, working closely with business and technical teams to assess feasibility, define requirements, deploy solutions, and generate sustainable revenue streams.</li><li>▪ Possess excellent verbal, written, and interpersonal communication skills; successful in delivering highly technical sales presentations and training sessions to diverse audiences ranging in size from 2 to 100 staff, clients, and end-users.</li></ul>
<i>Go-to-Market Launch Strategies</i>	
<i>Needs Analysis &amp; Consumer Insight</i>	
<i>Presentations &amp; Contract Negotiations</i>	
<i>Emerging Technology Deployment</i>	

For a Finance & Accounting Candidate:

FINANCE/ACCOUNTING PROFESSIONAL	
<b>Staff Accountant   Financial Manager   Human Resources Manager</b>	
Resourceful accounting, finance, and HR professional with more than 20 years of demonstrated analytical and problem-solving strengths. Proven track record in meeting the professional challenges associated with meeting critical business needs and in serving as an accounting and HR administrator, financial manager, and business and operations manager. Well-versed in areas including general ledger entry, accounts payable and receivable, account transactions, reconciliation, and customer service. Noted for insightful research, analysis, and implementation of new programs, products, and services. Additional capabilities include:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Automated Accounting Systems</li><li>✓ EFT / Transaction Processing</li><li>✓ HR / Employee Benefits</li><li>✓ Customer Service</li><li>✓ Budgeting</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Account Reconciliation / Transaction Processing</li><li>✓ General Ledger Maintenance / Internal Controls</li><li>✓ Facility &amp; Security Management</li><li>✓ Month- and Year-End Closings</li><li>✓ Problem Solving</li></ul>

As you can see, summaries can be structured to support the chosen format of each résumé, contain a group of fragmented sentences selected to strategically position the candidate, and promote the “highlights” of each candidate’s background and key qualifications.

Key to the success of the qualifications summary is a candidate’s thorough understanding of how they are positioning themselves in the market, what types of jobs they are applying for, and what their target market is going to be looking for in terms of experiences, skills, credentials, education, etc. In other words, the candidate has to understand and emulate the keywords and key phrases the screener will be looking for in order to pass the initial screening process. Key to this is the development of a strong and targeted qualifications summary.