GENERAL

how to write a dance resume

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How to Write a Dance Resume: A Complete Guide for Aspiring and Professional Dancers

Whether you're a student looking to audition for a prestigious ballet program or a seasoned performer aiming to secure a role in a touring company, your resume is your first impression. A well crafted **dance resume** not only showcases your technical ability but also tells the story of your artistic journey. In this guide, we'll walk you through every step of creating a polished, professional dancer resume that stands out in a competitive field.

Why a Strong Dance Resume Matters

Unlike most industries, dance hiring decisions often hinge on a combination of technical skill, stage presence, and a proven track record of performances. A clear, concise resume helps casting directors and choreographers quickly assess whether you're the right fit for a role. It also demonstrates your professionalism, organizational skills, and attention to detail—qualities that are highly valued in any performance setting.

Key Elements of a Dance Resume

Personal Information

Place your name, phone number, email, and optionally a professional website or LinkedIn profile at the top. Keep this section brief and easy to read. Avoid including unnecessary personal details such as age or marital status unless specifically requested.

Objective or Summary

A concise statement—one to two sentences—summarizing your career goals and what you bring to the table. For example: "Versatile contemporary dancer with 8 years of stage experience seeking a principal role in a resident company." Tailor this section for each audition or job application.

Training and Education

List your dance schools, instructors, and any formal education in dance or related fields. Include dates, locations, and the specific styles or techniques you studied. If you earned a degree or certificate, highlight it here.

Performance Experience

Chronologically order your performances, starting with the most recent. For each entry, provide the production title, company or choreographer, your role, and the date or season. If you participated in a competition or showcase, note your placement or awards received.

Rehearsal and Technical Skills

Highlight skills that set you apart: specific dance styles (ballet, jazz, hip hop, modern, lyrical), technical proficiencies (turnout, strength, flexibility), and any specialized training (acrobatic, tap, floor work). You can also include knowledge of stagecraft, such as lighting cues or costume handling.

Awards, Competitions, and Recognitions

Include any scholarships, grants, or competition prizes. Provide the name of the award, the awarding organization, and the year received. This section demonstrates external validation of your talent.

Additional Skills

List complementary abilities such as teaching, choreography, stage management, or language proficiency. These skills can make you a more versatile candidate.

References

Offer 2–3 professional references—typically former instructors, choreographers, or company directors—along with their contact information. Make sure to ask for permission beforehand.

Formatting Tips for a Polished Dance Resume

Length and Layout

Keep your resume to one page if you have less than five years of experience; two pages are acceptable for those with a more extensive background. Use a clean, single-column layout with clear headings and ample white space.

Font Choices and Readability

Select a professional font such as Times New Roman, Garamond, or Calibri, sized 10–12 points for body text and 14–16 points for headings. Avoid overly decorative fonts that may distract from the content.

Consistent Style and Grammar

Maintain uniform bullet points, verb tense, and formatting throughout. Use past tense for completed roles and present tense for ongoing training or teaching.

Visual Appeal Without Overload

While a dance resume can be visually engaging, avoid excessive graphics or color that can clutter the page. A subtle border or a tasteful use of a second color for headings can add a touch of personality.

How to Write a Dance Resume: Step by Step Guide

Step 1: Gather Your Information

- Collect all training certificates, performance programs, and award letters.
- Compile a list of all dance companies, festivals, and competitions you've participated in.
- Make note of any teaching or choreography work.

Step 2: Choose the Right Resume Format

Decide between **chronological** (most recent first), **functional** (skills-focused), or **hybrid**(combination). For most dancers, a chronological format is most effective, as it highlights your progression.

Step 3: Craft a Compelling Objective

Tailor this to the specific audition or role. Use action verbs and emphasize how your experience aligns with the company's needs.

Step 4: Highlight Your Training

Include the name of the school, the instructor's name (if notable), and the years attended. If you studied multiple styles, list them under each school.

Step 5: Showcase Your Performance History

For each performance, list:

1. Production title
2. Company or choreographer
3. Your role (soloist, ensemble, understudy)
4. Dates or season

Use bullet points to keep entries concise.

Step 6: List Technical Skills and Repertoire

Separate this into two sections if needed: **Technical Skills** (e.g., “Turnout: 90°, 180° turns, 360° pirouettes”) and **Repertoire** (e.g., “Classical: Swan Lake, Giselle; Contemporary: The Rite of Spring, La Valse”).

Step 7: Add Awards and Certifications

Present these in reverse chronological order. Include the award name, granting body, and year.

Step 8: Polish and Proofread

Check for spelling errors, inconsistent punctuation, and formatting mismatches. Have a trusted colleague review it as well.

Common Mistakes to Avoid

Overloading with Details

Too many specifics can overwhelm the reader. Focus on the most relevant and impressive experiences.

Inconsistent Formatting

Mixed bullet styles, font sizes, or heading levels can make your resume appear unprofessional.

Neglecting Soft Skills

Teamwork, communication, and reliability are critical in ensemble settings. Mention them where appropriate.

Using Generic Language

Replace phrases like “good dancer” with concrete achievements (“Performed lead role in a sold out production of *Les Sylphides*”).

Sample Dance Resume Templates

Chronological Template

Best for dancers with a clear progression of roles and increasing responsibility.

Functional Template

Ideal for individuals transitioning from other fields or those with gaps in performance history.

Hybrid Template

Combines the strengths of both chronological and functional formats, showcasing skills alongside experience.

Digital Presence: Linking Your Resume Online

Portfolio Websites

Create a dedicated dance portfolio (e.g., *DancePortfolio.com*) featuring video clips, rehearsal footage, and a

downloadable PDF of your resume.

Social Media Profiles

Maintain professional Instagram and YouTube accounts that showcase your performances and behind the scenes work. Include links in your resume.

Video Clips and Rehearsal Footage

Provide short, high quality clips that highlight your technique and stage presence. Keep each clip under two minutes.

Final Tips for Success

- Tailor each resume to the specific role or company.
- Keep the document up to date; add new performances and certifications promptly.
- Use action verbs and quantifiable achievements.
- Ask for feedback from mentors or industry professionals.
- Maintain a clean, professional online presence that complements your resume.

Conclusion

Crafting an effective **dance resume**is both an art and a science. By presenting your training, performance history, and technical skills in a clear, well structured format, you position yourself as a serious, dedicated professional ready to take on new challenges. Remember to keep your resume concise, tailored, and polished, and to support it with a strong digital portfolio. With these tools, you'll be ready to audition, audition, and audition—turning every opportunity into a stepping stone toward a thriving dance career.

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