psychology@iupui

Guide to the Resume

Note: *Request an electronic copy by emailing psyadv@iupui.edu. It will make following the numerous links in this document much easier.*

The purpose of your application, which includes both a cover letter and resume, is to highlight your skills and accomplishments in an unambiguous and concise manner that grabs the reader's attention quickly and enables them to clearly see the connection between their needs and your abilities.

Formatting your Resume

Functional (thematic) resumes focus on accomplishments rather than dates.
A functional resume does not often sit well with recruiters. They find this type of resume hard to follow and it raises red flags about gaps in employment. There is a time and place for a functional resume, but we suggest you avoid this style at this point in your career.

Skills resumes focus on skills rather than where you have worked.
Our opinion is that this approach presents the same problems as when using the functional style. You could list all the great skills you've developed but employers will find it hard to see how the skills fit with a particular job you had and how much time you worked in that position. We suggest you do not use this method at this point in your career.

Imaginative/ Creative resume is more like a mini-portfolio of creative work.
This style is very risky for general applications. However, if you are in a "creative field" like art, graphic design, architecture it MAY be acceptable. Much depends on the employer's style. This is not the most appropriate style for most psychology majors in general.

Reverse chronological resumes present work and education in chronological order beginning with the most recent experience.
This style is, what we believe to be, the most appropriate format for undergraduates **at this point** in your job search (seeking internships or your first post graduate job). This style emphasizes education and work experience. Many students find it beneficial to add a ***summary of skills*** (addressed later in this guide) to highlight their best attributes.

Suggestions for Getting Started

✓ Read this guide ***in its entirety*** before beginning or editing an older version of your resume.
Review sample resumes online to ***ideas*** on styles and layout. Think about how you may want to use "emphasis tools" (**bold,** *italic,* CAPITALIZE, or <u>underline</u>) for your headings and for separating critical facts in a consistent way. Some suggest that **bolding** your intended degree and job titles is best. Others say use *italic.* Decide what fits your style best and do it consistently for each entry. Just don't over-do it. Also, avoid using templates. Use them to get started and get an idea, but try not to just "plop in your information"

✓ Look at sample resumes online for ideas.

> *Sample Resumes*
> http://jobsearch.about.com/od/sampleresumes/a/sampleresume2.htm
> http://susanireland.com/resumeindex.htm

- ✓ Make it easy to read by using bullet points
- ✓ Carefully consider how information is organized (most important information should be at the top)
- ✓ Keep in mind that the top 1/3 of your resume is the "hot zone" and may be the only information read before someone makes an initial judgment on whether to read more or to move on to the next. Try opening your resume on your computer screen…what do you see without scrolling? Does it make you want to read more? You have about 15 seconds to make a good impression.
- ✓ If you are sending your application electronically, read all the submission instructions carefully. If possible you may want to send a Word version and a PDF version of your resume & cover letter. Remember, if they can't open it they won't read it.
- ✓ Decided on your section headings based on the story you want to tell and the position you are applying for. What categories fit with your experiences? For example, you may want a section titled "Related Experience" for the experiences you've had, both paid and unpaid, that relate most to the job you're applying for. Then, you may have a section called "Other Work Experience" for your jobs as a server or bartender. Depending on your experiences, you may add sections like Awards and Honors, Service, Clubs and Organizations, Presentations, Publications or Research Experience. The question you need to answer is: What have I done that will make me stand out to this employer? Generally speaking, don't create another section if you don't have more than one entry to add.
- ✓ Create your resume and cover letter in Microsoft Word (industry standard)
- ✓ **_Don't use a resume template_**. Do your own formatting to avoid problems when formatting down the road - it will save you hours of headache later. It also makes for a more original resume rather than the same old tired templates.
- ✓ DON'T use headers and footers or complicated formatting- keep it simple.
- ✓ Use "emphasis tools" (**bold,** *italic,* CAPITALIZE, or underline) to separate critical facts in a consistent way (but don't over-do it).
- ✓ Avoid abbreviations (except states) – even IUPUI should be spelled out.
- ✓ Use phrases and not full sentences
- ✓ **_ALWAYS_** avoid writing in the first or third person (I did this… or We did that…)
- ✓ Keep to 1-2 pages (nothing over)
- ✓ Keep font to 10 to 12 point
- ✓ One font should be used throughout the entire resume (exception: you can use a different font for your letterhead that is different from but compliments the rest of your resume)
- ✓ If you are printing your resume use 8 ½ by 11 paper (print with a high quality printer on high quality resume paper- 20#)
- ✓ Use simple fonts like Calibri, Tahoma, Palatino, Arial, Corbel (10 point Arial was a recruiter favorite)
- ✓ Name your resume document with your name. Example: JeschkeMikkiresume.doc. The reason is so that a recruiter, who may receive 100's of applications, can easily find your resume by your last name
- ✓ No pictures or graphics (exception: use a horizontal line to separate your letterhead or sparingly to separate sections of your resume)
- ✓ When creating your letterhead **_DO NOT USE UNDERLINE_** to separate your letterhead from the rest of your resume, use the Horizontal Line. In Word go to Insert/Shapes, choose the line and draw it in, and adjust the thickness to your liking
- ✓ Make it eye appealing by balancing information and white space on the page and aligning lines of information consistently (pay attention to each indent and tab)
- ✓ Within each section, be sure that information is presented in reverse chronological order **_beginning with the most recent_**. And, always include the dates of employment (or dates of involvement if it's a club or service activity)
- ✓ **_DO NOT_** include high school information and jobs on your resume. The exception is if the event you want to record was so significant (exchange student in Spain) or the job was very closely aligned to the job you're trying to acquire

Proofread and Get Feedback

The **#1 Pet Peeve of Recruiter surveyed by ResumeDoctor.com was SPELLING ERRORS, TYPOS, AND POOR GRAMMAR!!!!**

PROOF-READ YOUR RESUME!!!! For an employer, lack of attention to detail on your resume translates into lack of attention to detail on the job! If there are erroneous errors that your word processor picks up, right click on the word or phrase and select "ignore all" so that the reader does not see a lot of green and red underlines.

Get feedback from others. Use your parents, family, friends, current supervisor, faculty advisor, and career services professionals. Keep in mind that when you ask for feedback, you are going to get it and you will get conflicting information. This is YOUR resume and it should reflect YOU. Take into consideration the suggestions you get and if you are unsure, pass it by a career services professional you trust and decide what's best for you and your industry.

Letterhead

Brand yourself by creating a letterhead that reflects you.   This should include complete and accurate contact information. You can have a little style here, but don't go too crazy. Make your name stand out on the page by using bold, all caps and a larger font size. Include a phone number that you actually answer. Some employers, in a rush to hire, don't take the time to leave voice mails. **NOTE:** ***Be sure to check your voice mail message recording. Is it professional, hammy, or worse, inappropriate?***

Example 1

Mikki Jeschke
555 Getajob Street
Indianapolis, IN 46202
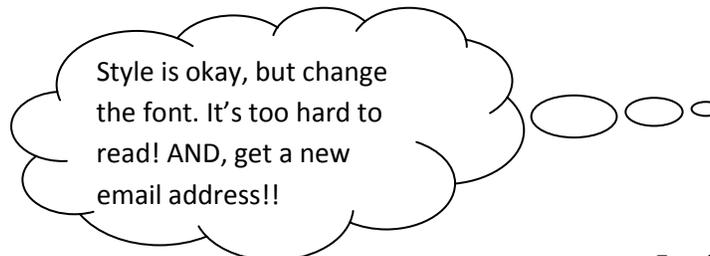Phone: 317-555-5555
Email: me@hotmail.com

This format is kind of boring! Your name should stand out.
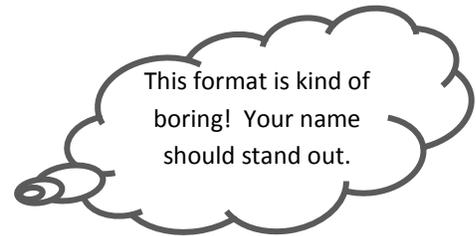
Example 2

Mikki Jeschke

555 Getajob Street • Downtown, IN 46202 • Phone: 317-555-5555 • email: mjeschke@iupui.edu

Example 3

Style is okay, but change the font. It's too hard to read! AND, get a new email address!!

Mikki Jeschke
555 Getajob Street
Indianapolis, In 46202
Phone: 317-555-5555
Email: imhot@hotmail.com

Use your letterhead for the top of your cover letter, thank you notes, reference page and any other correspondence you have with a potential employer or mentor. ***DO NOT*** include all of this "letterhead" information on the second page of your resume (if you have a second page). Simply place your name and page information on page 2. This is helpful to an employer (and to you) if your resume and others go flying onto the floor. The employer can easily put yours back together (where it may have just gone in the trash). Your second page heading should look something like this:

Example 1

Mikki Jeschke, page 2 of 2

Example 2

Mikki Jeschke, page 2 of 2

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P s y c h o l o g y   A d v i s i n g   O f f i c e ,   S c i e n c e   B u i l d i n g ,   L D 1 2 4 , p s y a d v @ i u p u i . e d u

Objective Statement

Use an Objective Statement at the top of your resume when you are NOT using a cover letter. Example: Career/Internship Fair or if your submitting online and they do not accept a cover letter. Typically this is the ***first thing an employer reads on your resume***.

An **Objective** should enable the reader to clearly see the type of position you seek and the connection between their needs and your abilities. Use the job ad to map your skills to what they are looking for in a strong candidate. A poor objective statement is usually one written with only the job seeker in mind and not what the job seeker can do to "solve the employer's problem." When you write an objective statement think about what can you do to fill the void in their company?

How do you write a strong Objective Statement? First, it is helpful to answer some of the following questions.

The following information was adapted from the OWL Online Writing Lab at Purdue University
http://owl.english.purdue.eduworkshops/hypertext/Resume@/objective.html.

Questions to ask yourself

What are my main qualifications (strengths, skills, area of expertise)?	Which of my qualifications are most desired by this employer?
What positions (or range of positions) do I seek?	What position titles (or range of positions) are available?
What are my professional goals?	What are some goals of the organizations that I'm interested in?
What type of organization or work setting am I interested in?	What types of organizations or work setting are now hiring?

Be specific

The most common mistake made in writing objective statements is being too general and vague in describing either the position desired or your qualifications. For example, some objective statements read like this: *An internship allowing me to utilize my knowledge and expertise in different areas.*

Such an objective statement raises more questions than it answers: What kind of internship? What knowledge? What kinds of expertise? Which areas? Be as specific as possible in your objective statement to help your readers see what you have to offer "at a glance."

Common Approaches

If you know you want to emphasize…	You might experiment with one or more of these formats	Samples
A specific position (or two) and your main relevant qualifications	A position as [name or type or position] allowing me to use my [qualifications]… To apply my [qualifications] as a [position title]…	A position as a Case Manager allowing me to use my knowledge of psychology and experience in human services to serve people with developmental disabilities.
The field or type of organization you want to work in AND your professional goal OR your main qualifications	An opportunity to [professional goal] in a [type of organization, work environment or field]… To enter [type of organization, work environment or field] allowing me to use my [qualifications]…	An opportunity to obtain an entry level human resource position, with eventual advancement to training and development in a not for profit. To join a research team allowing me to apply my knowledge and interests in research methodology, statistics and the biological sciences.

Your professional or career goal OR an organizational goal	To [professional goal]… An opportunity to [professional goal]…	To help children and families in troubled situations by utilizing my child protection services background.
A specific position desired	[Position Name].	Technical writer specializing in user documentation.
Whichever method you choose, be sure when you read it you clearly see how you will help the employer. Remember, employers have a problem they need to solve – that is why they are hiring. Can you solve their problem?		

Some variations to try

- Integrate key words and phrases used in the job advertisement (s)
- Avoid clichés, platitude, and tired expressions like "hard worker," "excellent communicator"
- Play with word choices to fit your strengths and your readers' expectations. You might try
    - Substituting for "use" words like "develop", "apply", or "employ", etc.
    - Replacing "allowing me" with "requiring" or "giving me the opportunity", etc
    - Changing "enter" to "join", "pursue", "obtain", "become a member", "contribute", etc.
- Blend two or more of the above generic models or create your own!

Summary of Skills

When not using an objective statement, create a Summary of Skills section (or Skills Profile, Summary of Qualifications etc.) that enables the reader to clearly see the connection between their needs and your abilities. So, to do this correctly, you must first know what skills and abilities you have learned or developed through your experiences and the skills and abilities the employer is seeking (look for this in the job ad).

Here is method you can use to develop your statement. As you respond to each section be certain to relate it back to the KEY WORDS found in the job ad/description.

START WITH:
Who you are and what can you achieve?
For example: *Highly competent psychology major with experience assisting disabled young adults with social skills and time management.*
OR
Who you are and what can you do?
For example: *Psychology major with a passion for helping victims of domestic abuse. Experience with successfully assisting to manage a multimillion dollar fundraising campaign.*

THEN ADD:
Identify your area of knowledge or expertise.
For example: *Psychology major with concentration in clinical psychology and extensive work and volunteer experience with drug and alcohol abuse programs.*
OR
What are your greatest strengths?
For example: L*eadership, communicate with groups, teach, build productive teams.*
OR
What are your technical skills?
For example: *Demonstrated skills in research methods, accurately tracking and analyzing data using SPSS and Excel, and successfully assisting in the execution of multiple aspects of a research project.*
OR
What are you unique or specific qualifications?
For example: *Bachelors of Psychology (anticipate, 2010), CPR certified.*

Complete summary statement examples:

Highly competent psychology major with experiences assisting disabled young adults with social skills and time management. Utilize effective communication, interpersonal, and research skills to successfully create original programming for teaching life skills, building rapport, and accurately documenting interactions. CPR certified.

Psychology major with a concentration in Industrial Organizational Psychology and one year of experience working as an intern in a human resources office. Successfully completed independent research project on the topic of stereotyping in the workplace. Strong leadership skills, team oriented worker, excellent communicator, and well developed research skills.

Psychology major with a passion for helping victims of domestic abuse. Experience with successfully assisting to manage a multimillion dollar fundraising campaign. Excellent managerial and budgeting skills, excellent fundraiser, and strong communicator.

Psychology major with a concentration in clinical psychology and volunteer experience with drug and alcohol abuse programs. Demonstrated skills in research methods, accurately tracking and analyzing data using SPSS and Excel, and successfully assisting in the execution of many components of a research project.

There are many ways to "summarize" who you are and what you have to offer the employer. The trick is doing it eloquently, succinctly, and in a way that demonstrates that you are the answer to their "problem." This takes a lot of time to develop. Have your advisors, mentors, friends and family review this and give you feedback.

Tips on Developing Better Skill Phrases
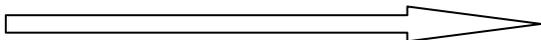
How to move from   A ⟶ **B**

Action Verb + Skill/Benefit
1. Think of an action verb
2. Think of a skill of benefit that you
   a. Have used
   b. Have gained or acquired
   c. Or that you will offer

Results
3. Now ask yourself:
   a. How did I gain or use this skill?
   b. Why?
   c. For what reason?
   d. Or to what extent?

Examples of Quality Skill Phrases
Enhanced (1) + communication skills (2) ➜ by working one on one with students to develop better studying techniques (3).
Developed (1) + skills in time management (2) ➜ by prioritizing tasks in order to increase productivity by 27% (3)
Trained horses (1 + 2) ➜ for private customers and achieved a large client pool by serval satisfied customers' referrals (3).

www.uwrf.edu/career

Education
We believe that the Education section should be next because it is one of your strongest selling point in this season of your life. Add content to this section that shows off your academic strengths. Here is an example of what this might look like.

Example 1 (good)

Education
    Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis, Indianapolis, IN
    Bachelor of Science in Psychology   *Anticipated May 2009*

    Related Course Work: xxxxxx, xxxxxx, xxxxxx, xxxxxxx
        (Write out the full name of course and don't list everything- just the ones most relevant to the job you're applying to)

Example 2 (better)

Education
    Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis, Indianapolis, IN
    Bachelor of Science in Psychology- expected date of graduation, May 2009
        Track concentration: Industrial Organizational Psychology
        Minor: Business
    GPA: 3.6/4.0
    Honors: Dean's list 2007- present
    Earned and financed 80% of college and living expenses
    Relevant Coursework: xxxxx, xxxxx, xxxxx, xxxx

You have some flexibility in deciding what to include- Example 1 is the minimum. Moving toward Example 2 is better. Notice how we spelled out Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis rather than writing IUPUI. It's more professional looking and there are people out there who don't really know what IUPUI is. Notice how we used **bolds,** *italic,* and font size to draw attention to information. Notice how we use indents. Bullets can also be used to separate information (but be cautious about over using bullets).

If you don't have a track concentration or minor, that's okay. If your GPA is not above a 3.5, it's not the end of the world- simply don't put it here. At this stage in your career life, having some relevant courses listed might build your case for having knowledge and skills that an employer is interested in seeing. This is especially true if you lack the work experience in the field you are trying to enter. If you have been awarded some academic awards or scholarships, you can decide if it's best to place it here or in another category called Awards and Recognitions, for example. If you're financing your education fully or in part, you can let the reader know. This demonstrates a strong desire to get an education and, if you're doing well, a variety of other skill sets (time management, multitasking, commitment to goal, organized, etc).

NOTE: If you've attended multiple campuses, the rule of thumb is to only list them if you attained a degree or certification there. Otherwise you can leave it off. Remember to also leave off any high school information at this point in your career.

Take a moment to list some of the key things you want to include in your education section:

Experience

List all the jobs you've had since high school:

List any of the clubs and/or activities you are involved in (at IUPUI, at your place of worship, in your community, etc):

List any of the volunteer or community service activities you've participated in (even if just for the day):

List any scholarships, awards, and recognitions you have received:

List local, regional, or national professional organizations or affiliations related to your career area of interests:

Based on what you've recorded above, think about what other categories you will have on YOUR resume.
Here's a list of common headers:
- Experience, Work Experience, Employment Experience, Relevant Experience, (more specific) Human Resource Experience, Other Experience
- Volunteer Experience, Community Service Experience, Community Activities

- Activities, Clubs and Organizations, Memberships
- Objective, Skills Profile, Skills, Related Skills and Training, (or more specifically), Language Skills, Computer Skills
- OTHER IDEAS: Awards and Recognitions, Presentations and Publications, Research Experience, Professional Affiliations

WORK EXPERIENCE: (or whatever you choose to call this) is where you will bring the reader's attention to the paid or unpaid experiences you have had. These should be listed in *reverse* chronological order. Begin by giving key facts about the experience- name of the company, your title or position, the location, and dates you worked. Then note the key skills you gained and most importantly your accomplishments. It's okay if your work experience is not directly related to what you're now pursuing. Students can have rich experiences in retail and food/beverage services. If you take any job seriously there are a number of skill sets you can develop and identify on your resume. We call these **Transferable Skills** (See Guide to Transferable Skills). Consider this: Have you trained other employees, been promoted, or managed others? Have you developed a policy or procedure that made operations run more smoothly? Have you been recognized for outstanding sales, service or some other work accomplishment? Find meaningful ways to develop yourself in ANY job or experience you have- it will serve you well in the future.

When describing the skills and accomplishments for each experience, you should use **ACTION STATEMENTS**. Action verbs should lead the sentence, phrase, or bullet point. These statements should give your reader a better picture of what you have to offer their company. When constructing your ACTION STATEMENT, consider the "what" and the "so what." **AND** always double check your use of word tense. If you are presently working in the job, use present tense. If you had the job in the past, use past tense.

Example:
        Developed an office database
                (This represents the "what")
Better Example:
        Developed a database that allowed staff of twenty to share client contact information.
                (This represents the "so what")

Here are two links to terrific web pages with lists of Action Verbs. Find more by doing a Google search for Action Verbs for Resumes.   http://www.writeexpress.com/action-verbs.html   AND http://www.quintcareers.com/action_skills.html are our favorites.

Practice Writing Action Statements

Consider one of the jobs you listed earlier and complete the following:

    My Job Facts: (Name of the company, position/title, city/state, dates of employment – *do not* list your work supervisors)

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P s y c h o l o g y   A d v i s i n g   O f f i c e ,   S c i e n c e   B u i l d i n g ,   L D 1 2 4 , p s y a d v @ i u p u i . e d u

Now list skills/accomplishment/ duties:

Now take the Skills/Accomplishments/Duties and create bulleted action statements, using **ACTION VERBS**, to describe the experience to an employer. We recommend 3-5 bullets depending on the importance (how it relates to what you're applying to) and the scope (did you have varied responsibilities that require more bullets) of the job. Remember to consider the "what" and the "so what." **Put the bullets in order of importance (lead with the best stuff)**. If you can quantify your accomplishment (presented to twenty people, raised $3500) it makes your statement more powerful.

Two important things to consider when writing these statements: 1) Now is not the time to be shy about your accomplishments. 2) Now is not the time to inflate the truth.   This can be the most time consuming part of developing your resume. This may take several drafts to get it right. ***SEEK FEEDBACK!!!***

The following section is taken from the Monroe community College www.monroecc.edu/go/careercenter, Action statements for a Resume.

Keep these things in mind when writing your action statements.
- These should be short, clearly written phrases.
- Use the minimum number of words necessary to convey accurate information.
- Select words that will mean something to the person who will read your resume.
- Avoid introductory phrases such as "my duties included" or I was in charge of."
- List accomplishments whenever possible rather than just describe duties.
- Always keep the needs of your employer in mind (refer to the job ad).

Here are some examples of how to create more accomplishment-oriented statements.

PASSIVE	ACTIVE	ACCOMPLISHMENT-ORIENTED
Duties included teaching art lessons.	Prepared and displayed creative art activities.	Prepared creative art activities, increased students' interest and abilities. Awarded four blue ribbons at District Art Show.

PASSIVE	ACTIVE	ACCOMPLISHMENT- ORIENTED
Customer Service	Provided customer service for bank services	Provided customer service through resolution of problems, explanation of bank service and policies, and knowledge of financial planning, resulting in greater customer satisfaction.

PASSIVE	ACTIVE	ACCOMPLISHMENT- ORIENTED
Department Manager	Managed department and recruited participants.	Staffed and managed a 20-30 person department that recruited participate for marketing research studies. Cut cost by one-third in less than six months.

PASSIVE	ACTIVE	ACCOMPLISHMENT- ORIENTED
Responsible for clerical duties.	Assisted supervisor with clerical/office procedures to save time.	Successfully developed and implemented systems to streamline office procedures, increasing productivity.

Practice writing your own accomplishment-oriented action statements:

Activities or Volunteer Experience is another common area that student have on their resume. Depending on how many "activities" you have, you may combine or create separate categories. Here are some examples of how you can identify these activities.

Examples:
Activities

Psychology Club, IUPUI, Department of Psychology   *member fall 2008- present*
Regularly participate in bi-monthly meetings, serve on organization committee to fundraise for a local charity, serve as club treasurer (spring 2009).

Service Activities

Angels Wings, Indianapolis, IN   *from spring 2009 to present*
Volunteered 5 hours a week at a local women's shelter. Performed initial intake paperwork for new clients and provided child care as needed while mothers were meeting with their counselor.

Volunteer Experience

Angels Wings Women's Shelter, Indianapolis, IN   *winter 2009*
Volunteered for a day at a local Wal-Mart to help collect toys for children who are victims of domestic violence. Collected over 100 toys in 4 hours.

Key points for this section:
- Be sure to give the name of the organization and where it's located.
- Provide the dates that you were active.
- If you can, create a brief summary of what you <u>accomplished</u> through membership or involvement.
- If your involvement in a club/ group or service project was significant and ongoing, and the <u>skills and accomplishments</u> you used/developed relate directly to the job you are applying for, consider whether or not it deserves a higher spot on your resume (under Related Experience).
- Quantify if you can. "Raised $3500 in 6 months for…"

References

There is no need to put "References Available Upon Request" on your resume. It's just space filler. Instead create a Reference page that has your letterhead at the top and format the reference information in a similar style to your resume. NEVER list your parents (or other family member), your pastor or your therapist to serve as a reference – your references should be people who can speak to your work or academic experience (supervisor or professor). When requesting a reference from someone, always ask if the person can give you a ***strong*** verbal or written reference.

Have this Reference page ready at the interview if it's requested, or ready to email/mail when requested later. Here's a sample of one way to format a reference page:

Mikki Jeschke
555 Getajob Street • Downtown, IN 46202 • Phone: 317-555-5555 • email: mjeschke@iupui.edu

REFERENCES
Joe Smith
Company Name
Title
555 Referme Street
Indianapolis, IN 46202
Phone: 317-555-5555
Email: me@hotmail.com

Suzy Smith
Company Name
Title
555 Referme Street

Indianapolis, IN 46202
Phone: 317-555-5555
Email: me@hotmail.com

Jim Smith
Company Name
Title
555 Referme Street
Indianapolis, IN 46202
Phone: 317-555-5555
Email: me@hotmail.com