



PERSPECTIVE ON RESUMES – PDF DOWNLOAD

TEN KEYS TO AN EFFECTIVE RESUME:

To help you construct a more effective, higher impact resume, here are ten overall considerations in regard to your resume's content and presentation:

1.) Position Title and Job Description:

Provide your specific title with a detailed explanation of your responsibilities, and as important, your accomplishments. Since job titles are often misleading or their function may vary from one company to another, your resume should tell the reader exactly what you have done.

2.) Clarity of Dates and Locations:

Document your work history and educational credentials accurately. Do not leave the reader guessing where and when you have been employed, or when you earned your degree.

3.) Explicitness:

Let the reader know the nature, size and location of your past employers. Identify your former employer's specific business and/or product line.

4.) Detail:

Specify some of the more technical, or specialized aspects of your past work or training, especially if you have performed tasks of any complexity, or significance to your product area of expertise.

5.) Proportion:

Give appropriate attention to past positions or educational credentials according to their length, or importance to the reader. For example, if you wish to be considered for an engineering position, do not write one paragraph describing your current Director Operations role, followed by three paragraphs about your earlier role as a Production Supervisor.

6.) Relevancy:

Confine your information to that which is career-related and which clearly demonstrates a pattern of success. Concentrate only on subject matter that addresses the needs of target employers.

7.) Length:

A one or two page resume is ideal. If you write more than two pages, it sends a signal to the reader that you cannot organize your thoughts, or you are trying too hard to make a good



impression. If your content is strong, you will not need more than two pages.

8.) Spelling, Grammar, Punctuation, and Consistency:

Create an error-free document that is representative of an educated professional. If you are unsure about the quality of your writing, consult a professional writer or editor. Remember, first impressions are often lasting impressions: your resume is what generates initial interest (or not).

9.) Readability:

Organize your thoughts in a clear and concise manner. Fragmented or long-winded resumes will virtually assure you of a place at the back of the line of interested applicants.

10.) Presentation:

Be sure to select a conventional type style such as Times Roman or Arial. Also, choose a neutral background or stationery. If your resume takes too much effort to read, it may end up discarded, even if you have terrific skills.

Finally, it is suggested you write several drafts, and allow yourself time to review your work and proofread for errors. If you have a professional associate whose opinion you trust, by all means, listen to what he or she has to say. A simple critique can make the difference between an interview and a rejection.

RESUME DESIGN: HOW TO GET RESULTS:

Employers prefer crisp-looking and professional-appearing resumes that get to the point. Focus on both the style and the substance your resume.

Layout: Add interest and clarity by using bullets, indents and varying font styles (such as bold and italic letters). Avoid using unconventional fonts or adding photos or graphics.

Length: The general rule is one page for early-career (entry level to 5-10 years) and two pages for mid-career (10 plus years) candidates.

Professional Experience: Provide the reader with relevant detail about your past and present employers, such as product information, size and physical location.

Measurables: Quantify your job duties, reporting relationships and achievements with actual numbers and percentages.

Work History and Education Dates: Make sure the dates are clear and without gaps. If you are a



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mid- to late-career candidate, you can save space by lumping early-career jobs together.

Degree Credentials: please be accurate and *honest*. Misrepresentation is both inappropriate and unethical. Be sure to specify whether you have degree coursework or an actual degree.

IDEAL RESUME FORMATTING FOR ELECTRONIC PROCESSING:

Most companies manage their talent acquisition efforts with specific software systems that automatically 'process' resumes into a database. Hiring managers then use this database to sort through candidate possibilities and select those they choose to interview. Compatibility with these systems maximizes ones chances for consideration.

How to create an electronically compatible resume:

- Remove all complicated formatting from your document including bullets, tables, text boxes, underlining, and other special characters.
- If you want to add structure by using bullets, replace bullet marks with dashes
- Use all capital letters to distinguish resume sections, i.e. EXPERIENCE and EDUCATION.
- Only use sans-serif fonts, which clearly separate each letter from the next. For example, a common serif font like Times New Roman can confuse resume parsers. We use the sans-serif font Arial.
- Rather than using tabs and section centering, always left justify your electronic resume.
- When saving the file, save it as a .txt or text file for maximum electronic compatibility.
- Finally, as a double check, open the saved file and remove extra spaces, lines, and re-save it as .txt or text file.

A STRONGER RESUME WILL INCREASE YOUR ODDS:

Presentation: Given the choice of two individuals of equal ability or relevance, hiring managers will always prefer to interview the one with the most professional and artfully constructed and attractive resume. For that reason, some candidates with superb qualifications are often overlooked because of their resume presentation. However, something to consider, is that many of the best candidates also have the best resumes.

In today's competitive employment market, your resume has to stand out in order to get the attention of the decision maker and create a strong impression. When you meet the prospective employer face to face, a strong resume will act as a valuable tool during the interviewing process. Strong first impressions can lead to even stronger face-to-face impressions, which of course, is your goal when pursuing a new opportunity.



Truth in Advertising: The best way to prepare a dynamite resume is not to change the facts, just make them more presentable. This can be accomplished in two ways: by strengthening the content of your resume, and by enhancing its appearance. Also, evaluate your resume for accuracy as it makes absolute ethical sense to honestly and clearly document your credentials. Do not make exaggerated claims about your accomplishments and employment.

Remember, your resume is written for target employers, not for you. A resume's primary purpose, once in the hands of the reader, is to answer the following questions: How do you present yourself to others? What have you done in the past? What are you likely to accomplish in the future?

In addition to providing a factual representation of your background, your resume serves as an advertisement. The more effective your 30-second commercial, the more the customer—the employer—will want to buy the expertise you offer.

CHOOSING THE BEST RESUME STRUCTURE:

Your resume can be arranged in one of two basic formats: summary or chronological.

- The *summary* (or functional) resume distills your total work experience into major areas of expertise, and focuses the reader's attention on your accumulated skills.
- The *chronological* resume presents your skills and accomplishments within the framework of your past employers in reverse chronological order.

Although the information you furnish the reader may essentially be the same, there is quite a difference in the way the two types of resumes are constructed, and the level of impact each will have. Our experience has shown that the chronological resume generates the best results since it is the most explicit description of the quality and application of your skills within a specific time frame.

The summary resume, on the other hand, works well if you wish to highlight your level of expertise. If a prospective hiring manager is specifically interested in a steady, progressively advancing employment history (as most are), then the summary resume will very likely work against you, and may arouse suspicions as to your potential for longevity.

However, if the employer's main concern is your technical or problem-solving ability, the summary resume could be very effective. Either way, you should always follow the guidelines mentioned earlier regarding specific content and professional appearance.



As you create the objective paragraph of your resume, you should consider that most employers find that a carefully worded statement of purpose will help them quickly evaluate your potential suitability for a given position. An objective statement can be particularly useful as a quick-screen device when viewed by the manager responsible for staffing several different types of positions.

While a stated objective gives you the advantage of targeting your employment goals, it can also work against you. A hiring manager who is hard pressed for time will often overlook a resume with an objective that does not conform to the exact specifications of a position opening. If you are sure of the exact position you want in the field or industry that you are interested in, then state it in your objective. Alternatively, you could broaden your objective or leave it off the resume entirely.

BEEFING UP AN ANEMIC RESUME:

To get the most mileage out of your resume, you will want to emphasize the most relevant aspects of your background. By doing so, you will present your qualifications in the most favorable light, and give the employer a better understanding of your potential value to their organization. To build a stronger case for your candidacy, try highlighting the following areas of interest:

Professional achievements of particular interest: For example, if you are in sales, the first thing a hiring manager will want to know is your sales volume, and how you rank with your peers. If you have won awards, reached goals or made your company money, show it on your resume.

Educational accomplishments: List your degree(s) and/or relevant coursework, thesis or dissertation, or specialized training along with dates. Be sure to mention any special honors, scholarships, or awards you may have received, such as Dean's List, Cum Laude, or Phi Beta Kappa.

Additional areas of competency: These may include computer software proficiency, dollar amount of monthly raw materials purchased, size of marketing budget, or specialized training.

Professional designations that carry weight in your field: If you are licensed or certified in your chosen profession or belong to a trade organization, by all means let the reader know.

Success indicators: You should definitely include anything in your past that might distinguish you as a leader or achiever. For example, if you worked full time to put yourself through school, you should consider that experience a success indicator, and mention it on your resume.



Related experience: Anything that would be relevant to your prospective employer's needs. For example, if your occupation requires overseas travel or communication, list your knowledge of foreign languages. If you worked as a co-op student in college, especially in the industry you are currently in, let the reader know.

Military history: If you served in the armed forces, describe your length of service, specific dates, branch of service, rank, special training, medals, and discharge and/or reserve status. Employers generally react favorably to military service experience.

Citizenship or residency status: This should be mentioned if your current residency status offers certain challenges for future US employment.

Distinguish yourself from your competition: In a competitive market, employers are always on the lookout for traits that distinguish one candidate from another. An example: we heard of a Vice President Engineering candidate who mentioned the fact that he was a three-time national power speedboat champion on his resume. It came as no surprise that several employers warmed up to his resume immediately, and wanted to interview him.

DANGERS OF RESUME OVERKILL:

Nearly everything written about resume design concentrates on what you should put in it. One should however, consider what should be left out, or at least minimized.

Item #1: Salary history or salary requirements:

There is rarely good reason to mention your past, current, or expected salary on your resume.

Item #2: References:

If you have high-impact or well known professional references, include them. Otherwise, "References: Available upon Request" will do just fine. When presenting references avoid using personal, non-professional contacts. Often, the best or most effective references are your previous managers.

Item #3: Superfluous extras:

When submitting a resume, avoid enclosing such items as your thesis, photos, diplomas, transcripts, product samples, newspaper articles, blueprints, designs, or letters of recommendation. Selectively, you may want to bring relevant items to an interview, but not before. The only thing other than your resume and introductory letter that is acceptable to include is your business card.



Item #4: Personal information:

Leave out anything other than the absolute essentials such as, “Married, two children, willing to relocate, excellent health.” By listing all of your social interests, you could give the employer a reason to suspect that your outside activities may interfere with your performance.

Remember, the greater the relevancy between your resume and the needs of the employer, the more seriously your candidacy will be considered. Say what you need to get the job, honestly, and nothing more. Further, the resume that is more professional in content and appearance is the one that will generate interest.

COMMON RESUME MISTAKES

First Impressions Count:

Your resume should highlight your relevant experience, your accomplishments, and your capabilities in the most favorable light possible. Take care to present your qualifiers clearly and precisely, and know your target audience.

Measurables Count But Are Often Overlooked:

In the resume design section, we highlighted ‘measurables’ as the quantifiers of current position responsibilities, reporting relationships and specific achievements and recommended using actual numbers and percentages as qualifiers. Often overlooked, this is one of the most important sections or subjects in a resume. Be sure to specify the qualifiers so that the interviewer has an at-a-glance understanding of your responsibilities, and can draw conclusions on your potential capabilities.

Some examples of ‘measurables’: type of company, size of company, annual sales of company, specific product experience, size of department, number of employees supervised, specific percentage increases or decreases in sales, costs, efficiencies, profitability, etc.

Complicated Resume Formatting:

Often resumes that look great on paper have complicated formatting such as, tables, text boxes, and borders that are incompatible with automated resume and talent acquisition management systems.

Example: MS Word’s resume template looks great but most resume-management systems cannot accurately process the information because the resume formatting confuses the software.



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Automated talent acquisition management systems are here to stay. To ensure 'electronic' compatibility and to ensure that you will be considered for the role you desire, we suggest you:

- Minimize the complex formatting such as borders and tables.
- Minimize the use of complex and fancy or serif fonts.
- Consider saving the document in '.txt' or '.rtf' formats.
- Name your resume as LastnameFirstnameMiddleInitial.

First impressions do count. When creating a resume one should consider the content impressions and visual impression – whether printed or electronic.

For more information, we can be reached at 866-898-9911 or cv@hensonpartners.com.

DISCLAIMER: Henson Partners, Inc. offers this document as a general guideline to resume preparation and design. The suggestions are based on our recruitment expertise and feedback from our candidates and clients. For further information, there are many publications offering resume development advice and companies offering professional resume preparation services.