Résumés: 14 More Tips for Success

Additional advice on navigating the résumé minefield.

Make it easy on the eyes.

If you're a job seeker, your résumé is one of the most important documents you'll ever create or need. Make it concise, precise, and easy for a recruiter to scan in 30 seconds or less. Bogging down the process speeds up your trip to the trash.

One sheet, one side. Limit your résumé to one page if you're a student or recent graduate. Not only is your experience likely to be limited, but not all electronic résumé scanners used by companies will scan beyond the first page.

Paragraphs and full sentences. To the horror of your high school English teacher, a résumé does not rely on complete sentences and paragraphs. Rather, bullet specifics to quickly convey information. Some recruiters need only seven seconds to scan a résumé and decide if it's worth keeping.

The cream rises. Organize important information, skills, and details near the top for impact. Bury it and risk losing the recruiter's interest before the end.

Brief, yes. Abbreviate, no. Leave the ASAP, BTW, and THX for texting. Not everyone understands SMS terminology, and it's unprofessional in a résumé. However, certain industry terminology and keywords, such as HTML, CPR, CGI, CPA, RN are expected, even required. Consult the job description.

What vs How. Recruiters are less interested in your past duties, and more in your actual achievements. Focus on *how* you handled work responsibilities, *what* you achieved, and *why* it was important to your employer: "Generated marketing strategies for a 35% increase in bakery sales" vs "Sold donuts." Recruiters want candidates who can bring tangible and positive results and value to their company.

A picture is not worth 1,000 words. Don't send pictures of yourself, artwork, videos, sound bites, or anything other than what is requested in the job posting. A résumé is about data, so don't distract.

Don't date yourself. Include dates, but not too far back. Include month and year. If you're a recent grad, it's fine to include your year of graduation. If you're older, and have been out of college for 10 years or more, listing your graduation date might actually work against you due to age discrimination.

Be tech savvy. Companies use electronic Applicant Tracking Systems (ATS) to pre-screen candidates, so résumés rich in keywords and content relevant to the job description have enhanced visibility and ranking. However, ATS is *not* perfect and can be selective. Keep your format simple and easy to scan; no fancy fonts or graphics. Word docs are recommended over PDFs. Use the job description as a guide: Does it say "Manager" or "Mgr," "Assistant" or "Asst"? Mirror keywords found there.

Take charge. Use strong action verbs for impact when bulleting achievements: "Tutored," "Implemented," and "Solved." Your choice of words should compel the reader to want to learn more about you.

Numbers count. Be specific. Include numbers, percentages, and figures for maximum effect and to your advantage: "Streamlined the shipping process in 30 days for a 25% increase in productivity."

Avoid repetition. State experience and achievements once, or it can become boring and take up valuable real estate. Plus, employers *know* what the job entails, so focus on what you *bring* to it.

Details. Details. Details. Include only if they're relevant to the job position.

Does your alma mater matter? As time goes on and you gain more experience, your college info and dates should move further down the food chain. More recent work and relevant experience should be listed at the top.

Keep it personal. Don't list recruiters' names together in the "To:" field in mass emails. It's impersonal and bad manners to share email addresses without consideration of others' privacy. Instead, use Bcc: for multiple employers and mass emails.

ℹn a nutshell:

Make your résumé easy to read:

- **Hit the target with bullet points, not complete sentences**

- **Include numbers, figures, percentages, dates, and job-critical keywords**

- **Show how you bring value with achievements, not duties**

- **No chat or text acronyms; nix the pix and gimmicks**

- **Don't bury important info; phase out college activities as you gain work experience**

- **Make your résumé electronic scanner friendly**

Always make it about meeting the recruiter's needs. Don't expect employers to try and fit you in.

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