



## SUGGESTIONS FOR WRITING A RESUME

***A resume will not get you a job***, but it could prevent you from getting the job that might be a perfect match to your background, experience and interests. For these reasons, spending the necessary time drafting, editing, and formatting an effective presentation of your skills and accomplishments is a critical step in the job search process. Going through multiple edits of your resume, continuing to change it until you get it right, is common, and recommended. Also, it is not uncommon to have more than one resume, with each iteration focused on a particular type of job (i.e. Sales, Applications Engineering, Project Manager...).

A resume is often the one and only means of introducing yourself to a potential employer. And we all know how important **First Impressions** are in business. ***Your Resume is a direct reflection of you.*** A poorly formatted, shoddily written resume with misspellings and typos is a sure way to kill any chance you might have of getting an interview for a position for which you might be ultimately qualified, and even potentially the best candidate.

Below are some thoughts we are happy to share on preparing your resume. If you have specific questions on any of this, **do not hesitate to call us** to discuss them. We are always happy to speak with you about your search and preparation.

**GOOD HUNTING!!**

## OVERVIEW

It is important to note that typically **you only have a few seconds** to make the impression you desire with a resume. When a recruiter is reviewing responses to an advertisement placed on-line or in print, they may receive well over 100 resumes in response. If the person reviewing your resume isn't able to quickly identify some key points that would indicate a potential fit for their needs, they will likely pass and move on to the next one.

Having reviewed hundreds of thousands of resumes over the course of our careers, we have developed definite opinions about what we like and don't like in a resume. Below we have attempted to put some of our thoughts together on formatting and content. Keep in mind, this is one opinion and is designed to give you some ideas on how you might want to present your own credentials to a prospective employer.

One recommended resume format is described in the following:

## FONTS AND FORMATTING

Use a clean and simple font such as Ariel. The font should be easy on the eyes and scannable by the many *Automated Applicant Tracking* systems in use today. Use 10 point or 12 point type, depending on how much content you have to present.

Keeping a large margin of white space on the left will limit how much content you can present throughout the resume. If you are relatively new to the workforce and do not have much experience to relate, this is fine. But, for those with much job history to report, using the whole page gives you more space for your presentation, and allows you to limit the number of pages in the final resume presentation.

Change the Format between **COMPANY NAMES**, *Job Titles* and text. And be consistent throughout the document. You want to make it easy for the reader to identify this important information.

**Name, Address, Phone Numbers, and email address** should appear at the top of the page with your name in a larger font than the main body of the resume. We do not recommend putting this information in very small fonts in text boxes as some resume writing templates will direct you to do. Keeping this pertinent information together at the top of the document also helps when the resume gets scanned into the electronic *Applicant Tracking Systems* in use at most companies today. With this critical contact information in a standard format at the top of your resume, you will have a better chance of this information automatically populating the right fields in the employer's system.

**Job Objectives: We are not fans of the Job Objective.** Describing your Ideal job may be helpful when the position for which you are applying is a match, but it can also eliminate you from consideration for other, potentially rewarding positions that don't fit your stated "Objective". Our recommendation is that you should use a **Cover Letter** or accompanying email to focus your interest on the specific position for which you are applying.

**Summary:** A couple of sentences that profiles you, your most significant experience, expertise, and personal characteristics that a prospective employer might be interested in. This is who you are and what you will bring to a new employer.

**Professional Experience:** A list of companies and jobs in reverse chronological order. We recommend that each job title be followed by a two or three sentence description of main duties and responsibilities, then a list of your most significant accomplishments in a bulleted format. The more quantifiable you can be with these accomplishments, talking about significant dollar increases or percentage increases in sales, profit margin, etc., the better, as the reader will hopefully interpret this as, "if he did this for them, maybe he can do it for us." With regard to **Dates**, we prefer to simply show the Years you worked for an employer in a specific position rather than getting more detailed by displaying the Months as well.

**Education:** Schools, degrees and any other impressive information that might be pertinent. You may choose to identify the Dates of your College and post-graduate degrees or not. This is a personal preference. For those with much experience, however, keep in mind that prospective employers can often use these dates to determine a candidate's age. And, while we all know that it is illegal to discriminate based on age, if a candidate is not contacted for an interview, it is difficult to show that age was a factor in the decision process. **NOTE:** for individuals who have recently graduated college,

or for whom their education is one of the most significant aspects of their credentials, Education could be placed ahead of Professional experience on the resume.

**Other:** Use a final section at the end of the resume to list: Business/Trade associations to which you belong, including any offices held (President, Director, Secretary, etc.), Specific additional pertinent training you might have received, Papers published, presentations given, patents awarded, etc.

Keep in mind that the reader will likely be **Skimming** the information for key points that relate to the job, their business, etc. You want this information easy to identify. After the reader has determined that you appear to have the basics, and therefore warrant further scrutiny, they will likely then read the entire resume in detail.

## HOW MANY PAGES SHOULD MY RESUME BE?

Many will tell you that a resume should be no more than one page. Others will suggest no more than 2 pages. Our feeling is that, if you have been in the workforce for less than 5 years, one page is probably sufficient. For the *Experienced Professional*, two pages is fine. And, for those with significant experience, education and accomplishments, three pages can be OK as well. You may have a more lengthy document in your files which you could use for select opportunities, or that you might bring with you to an interview that was gained from the submission of a shorter, more standard, resume. But, generally speaking, a resume of more than 2 or 3 pages for your initial presentation is overkill, and can be a turn-off to those reviewing hundreds of responses to an ad to which you may have responded.

## CHRONOLOGICAL V. FUNCTIONAL RESUMES

In our opinion, **“Chronological” resumes work best.** We are not fans of the “Functional” resume. Functional resumes tend to be very wordy and it is often difficult to assign specific accomplishments to the job in which it was performed. Some will think you are attempting to cover-up something by using a functional resume. Bottom line: we feel that Functional Resumes can be confusing and frustrating to your target audience. Again, if the reviewer is not able to find what they are looking for in just a few seconds of review, you may not get another chance.

## KEY WORDS

Because so many employers today are using *Automated Applicant Tracking* systems, if your resume does not contain the specific Key Words relevant to a particular position, it is likely it will never be seen by a pair of human eyes. Often the resume is scanned into a database without anyone ever reviewing it. A recruiter will likely *search* the database for Key Words relevant to the position they are attempting to fill.

*As mentioned at the top of this article, this is one opinion. If you found this helpful, we’ve accomplished our goal. If you find it in any way confusing or contradictory, please let us know. Your feedback is appreciated. Feel free to email us with your comments.*