

Writing an effective resume

The rules of the road when it comes to resume writing are changing rapidly as technology advances. Get yours moved to the top of the heap with these tips and advice.

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Knowing how to write an effective resume is a critical step in job hunting and career advancement. Even if you're comfortable in your current position, it's important to keep your resume updated. When writing and formatting, remember, too, your resume may be reviewed not only by hiring managers but often by software programs that electronically scan resumes for keywords.

Use these 10 tips to create a resume that will catch the attention of a hiring manager as well as raise your ranking in a keyword search program. You are, in essence, creating a document to market yourself with – so make sure you represent your product well!

Choose a resume template.

Use a template to get a jumpstart on creating your resume. Add your pertinent information being sure it showcases your skills and experience in their best light. There are a variety of templates including in popular word processing software such as [Microsoft Word](#) as well sites on the internet. Here's a few popular links:

- [Resume Template.org](#)
- [U.S. Department of Labor CareerOneStop](#)
- [CollegeGrad.com](#)

You will need to choose a format relevant to the position you're applying for – CV, chronological or functional.

Keep it focused and professional.

Your resume should be specific – list accomplishments rather than a laundry list of duties. For example, instead of “oversaw the administration of the company’s internet,” use “implemented a new content creation method that decreased the amount of time to upload content by 10%.”

Don't try to get noticed by being amusing and clever. At this point, with no knowledge of your reader, you should stick to the facts.

Keep it relevant.

For each position you apply for, you will need to rewrite your resume to bring attention to your skills relevant to the job. Focus on the most recent experience you have that maps to the job's requirements. Dated or less relevant experience should either be edited out or summarized in bullet points near the end of your resume.

Make it short and sweet.

Use your resume to highlight your skills and accomplishments and not a list of your job history. More than two pages is always too much. Students, recent graduates or people with just a few years of experience should keep a resume to one page. Keep the language clear and simple as well – there's no need to use a five-syllable word when one will do.

Proofread. Again and again and again...

The grammar, spelling and punctuation must be perfect. Don't rely on a software spell checker – read the resume out loud to help catch any errors. Even a small mistake can damage your credibility. If possible, have someone else review it – they can catch mistakes you may have missed.

Tailor your resume to the job opportunity.

Carefully review the job description and analyze the qualifications, skills and abilities the employer is looking for. Use the written requirements of the job you're applying for to tailor your resume, paying attention to keywords that map to the requirements, and highlight your relevant experience.

Write a solid cover letter.

The cover letter should be short and succinct. Begin by introducing yourself, then briefly summarize why you believe you have the qualifications and experience to handle position better than other potential applicants. Don't repeat points from the body of your resume in your cover letter.

Consider aesthetics.

A professional looking resume begins with a clean and simple format. Since most resumes are submitted electronically, you will want to consider creating a text version of it as well.

NOTE: According to industry experts, the formatting of a resume shouldn't include tables, lines or shading since most are scanned for keywords. The extra formatting can make a hiring manager or scan program miss them.

Tell the truth.

Be honest about your education, skills and experience. Don't exaggerate your abilities or, worse, tell a lie.

Read and follow instructions carefully.

Submit your resume in the exact format that the prospective employer requests. Meet or beat the specified deadline and send the resume using the requested method, whether by mail, email or fax.