

# Resume Writing Guidelines

A resume will not get you a job but it is one of the first impressions a recruiter or possible employer has of you as a candidate. Beyond the content, it provides insight into how you arrange ideas, your attention to detail, and your ability to write succinctly. An important point to remember is that most resumes are scanned as well as read. The trick is to cover your career thoroughly in as few words as possible. When finished with your resume, carefully review and specifically look for words that can be deleted without losing content or meaning.

## **General Impression**

- No more than three pages. Professionals that have had a successful career will need more than one page to detail those accomplishments.
- Use only one font type. I suggest using Arial or Times New Roman. A font size of 11 or 12 is good for the content of the body. You may use a larger font size on titles or section headings.
- Bold, underline, italicize or change the font size if you need to emphasize or separate items.
- Stay with simple outline form. An introductory statement and bullet points is highly preferred versus paragraph format.
- Less can be more – your resume should get my attention but not tell me everything about you.

## **RESUME CONTENT**

### **Contact Information:**

- Name (large (26+ pt), bold font)
- Address
- Phone numbers (identified as home, work or cell)
- Email address

**Summary:** You may choose to start your resume with a brief paragraph giving a thumbnail sketch of your professional background. Keep the summary under 4-5 lines.

### **Employment History**

- Start with current or most recent positions.
- Include all positions from college graduation date.
- Dates (with months) for each position
- Company (name and location)...you may want to consider a one or two sentence description of the company.
- Title or position
- If you held multiple positions with the same company group them together.
- Each position should include a brief description of duties and responsibilities
- Company name, dates, title, etc should be set apart with larger font size or bold type.
- List accomplishments that are specific to that position and quantify them with numbers when possible.

- For sales positions include a brief description of territory and customer base
- Include a one sentence explanation after every position (especially when changing companies) why you left that position for another.

### **Education**

- Start with college and advanced degrees including dates.
- Do not list a high school unless there is not a college degree.
- If you are currently working on a degree it is okay to include this on your resume. Make sure you list your expected graduation date and make it clear that this degree is not yet earned.
- This is a good place to include any additional industry or other work related training.

**Personal Information:** A small amount of personal information is not necessary but acceptable. Information such as hobbies, family background and community involvement is fine. Keep this information brief and list toward the end of the resume. **Do not list religious information or your social security number.**

**Awards:** List as separate section or with specific positions you have held. If you list an award, also include a brief description of the difficulty of earning the award.

**Accomplishments:** Can be listed as a separate section or with specific positions in the “Employment History” section (my strong preference). Be sure they are quantifiable with hard numbers. Example: “Increased sales from \$1.2M to \$4.3M” or “decreased delivery errors by 45%” or “developed new employee handbook”

**References:** You should have 4-6 business references ready. Neither companies nor recruiters want social or casual references. Strive to have at one or more previous supervisors. Other options are peers and customers or vendors that can speak knowledgeably about you. Try to use people who meet most of these criteria:

1. They must know you well enough to speak in-depth as to your assets.
2. You have interacted in a business relationship with them in the last 5 years.
3. They have a prominent position in the industry or their organization.
4. They are articulate and communicate well.
5. They know you are using them as a reference.

**List references in a separate document from your resume.**

Make sure you list:

1. Name
2. Company
3. Title
4. Brief description of relationship
5. **Current** contact information. Make sure it is current and make sure they can be contacted during business hours if possible.

## **Other Tips:**

- Microsoft Word is a universal business language. Make sure your resume can be opened with Word. Adobe Acrobat is also acceptable. Send as a Word.doc attachment. Asking a potential employer or recruiter to accept a resume via fax or by mail can be interpreted as being unskilled with basic communications technology.
- It is felony offense in most states to falsify information on your resume.
- Your resume is not the place to be modest. This is your first (and sometimes only) time to make an impression. It is okay to brag as long as it is done professionally and you do not present yourself as “too-good-to-be-true”.
- Do not assume that a job title “speaks for itself” as the same title may have different responsibilities in different organizations.
- Keep your resume clean and easy to read with plenty of open space. A cluttered resume tends to be a burden to review.
- Be careful if you are using technical terms or acronyms that may not be understood outside of your industry.
- Do not write in third person.
- List dates on all positions and college degrees. If dates are absent it looks like you are trying to hide something.
- Does your resume answer these questions?
  - What have I done?
  - How well have I done it?
  - What assets do I have to offer a new company?