

Tips for Revamping Your Resume

1. Find a Professional Format

As fun as it might look on the page, now is not the time to use weird fonts. Unless you are working in a creative field where you should be showing off your style, **stick to something classic**. Times New Roman is great go-to, or try a serif font with a little more individuality, like Book Antiqua, Georgia, Calibri or Lucida Bright. Make use of social media, such as adding your personal or professional website, but closely monitor the online image you portray. The last thing you want is a recruiter to pull up drunk photos of you on Facebook!

2. Put the Good Stuff First

The real secret to a good resume is focusing your reader's attention. In an ideal world, recruiters would read every word on your resume. In reality, that rarely happens. Also, one mistake is to use chronological (date) order. Why lead with "Babysitter in High School" when you could lead with "Strategic Planning Analyst?" Even reverse chronological order (which is more common) may not give you the flexibility you want to highlight your best and most relevant accomplishments. Don't be afraid to use a hybrid resume, which combines the chronological and functional formats. **A hybrid resume will call attention to your most relevant experience** and accomplishments, and you can highlight your skills by including a summary section.

3. Quantify & Be Specific

Quantify your contributions with NUMBERS. You increased recruiting? Give us the percent increase. You raised money for charity? Tell us how much you raised! This can turn average-looking experiences into impressive head-turners and help distinguish you from other candidates. The flip-side of that is that specifics can also make some accomplishments look worse. If you only raised \$150, you might want to think twice before including that—it's unlikely to impress a billion dollar company. This is true of your classes as well. Mentioning relevant coursework can help catch a recruiter's eye, but listing English 101 will not. Quantifiable contributions can be: Performance-driven, Goal-oriented, Time-defined, Initiative-based, or Action-backed. How did you: Make Money, Save Money, Save Time, Increase Production, Reduce Turnover, Increase Retention, etc.?

Also, consider switching out an objective for a summary of skills and accomplishments – don't paint yourself into a corner unless you're applying for your specific dream job!

Make your resume accomplishments-driven rather than duties-driven.

4. Vary Your Verbs

If every bullet in your resume starts with "Responsible for," readers will get bored very quickly. Use the attached list of action verbs to mix it up.

5. Proofread

Grammar or spelling errors in a resume can be the difference between the “keep” pile and the “trash” pile. At best, you look sloppy. **Spell-check isn't enough** – you need to proofread!!

6. Make Every Word Count

Unless you're a tenured professor who needs to list every book and article you've ever published, your **resume should be one page**, maximum of two. While this limits the space you have to share your experience, think of it as a blessing in disguise: it forces you to focus.

You don't need an equal number of bullets under each experience. **You should be spending more words on your most impressive set of experiences.** Moreover, if a job isn't relevant anymore, take it out! You don't need to prove that you've been employed since 1997.

Can't make things fit on one page? Keep cutting it down. You can play with margins and font sizes a bit if necessary—but don't overdo it. The point is to choose the right experiences, not squish them in. Plus, a dense resume is harder to read. And the harder your resume is to read, the more likely people will just skim it. Use a second page only if necessary based on relevant experience.

7. PDF, PDF, PDF

This one is simple: PDFs look the same on any computer. Word documents, on the other hand, can show up with wacky formatting or spill onto a second page if opened with a different version of Word or on a PC vs. a Mac. Make sure companies see what you want them to see.

Mistakes to avoid:

1 – No cover letter (use key words, and research the goals/values of the organization)

#2 – Too much personal information (that gives reference to age, race, religious or political affiliation)

#3 – Eliminate this phrase: “References Available upon request.” If they are truly interested in you, they will ask you for your references anyway.

#4 – Don't list dates first. Students and recent graduates with short job tenure run the risk of looking like a “job-hopper.” A good order is title/position, name of employer, city/state of employer, and then dates underneath or aligned to the right (since people read from the top down and left to right).