



Writing Your Resume

Your resume is a quick introduction to who you are. How long do you think a hiring manager actually spends looking at your resume? Five minutes? One minute? Wrong. The average time someone will spend looking at your resume is 6 seconds according to a study done by TheLadders, the online job search site. That statistic alone makes it clear how important it is to create a professional resume that represents you in the most favorable way possible. Sloppy work, mis-spellings, grammatical errors and inappropriate humor can rule someone out of consideration quickly when scrutinized by Human Resources or the hiring manager. Below are some general pointers that should be helpful in creating an effective resume for your job search.

Gather the Information You Need.

- All positions, dates of employment, responsibilities and your achievements at each position. Make the responsibilities specific and quantifiable, not general. It is more useful information to a potential employer to know how much of a budget you oversaw or how much you grew a territory over your tenure or how many people you managed than to only know that you managed the people and budget for a territory. If it involved a promotion or upward career move, it may also be useful to cite the reason for a change in a position.
- All education with dates, schools or organizations involved and resulting degrees, certifications and/or licensures. Include seminars and workshops and all professional education. You are letting the company know that you are a life-long learner and don't consider yourself finished after high school or college.
- All civic and community involvement with dates of service, especially in leadership capacities. Being chairman of a fund-raising committee, for example, says something about your ability to manage a group and a project even when your current position may not have given you that opportunity.
- All professional designations, certifications and licenses.

Put the Information Together.

- Don't worry about confining the information to one page if you have significant experience but don't go beyond 3 pages.
- Your resume should be tailored to the position you are pursuing if possible so consider the skills and qualities in the job description or posting and build your content on that.
- Begin with your name, address and contact information (phone number and email address).



- Don't title your resume like "Resume of Ted Miller" or put in an Objective. Those kinds of things just take space and are redundant. Your objective can be detailed and clarified in a more effective manner in your cover letter.
- Create the Employment section. Again, keep the potential employer and the position in mind as you're building this section. Include title, company name, city, state and the years you worked there. Include responsibilities and achievements attempting to be as specific and quantifiable as possible especially if they parallel duties and responsibilities in the position you are pursuing.
- Build the Education section. Include all degrees first (type of degree, school, location of school and date of graduation). Follow that with any professional education or technical training relevant to the competencies needed in the position you are pursuing. Follow that with any continuing education, again emphasizing the fact that you are a life-long learner and capable of learning new systems and processes if there are any experiential gaps in your fit for the position at hand.
- Create the Civic Involvement section. Include everything that gives the potential employer the understanding that you are a well-rounded individual with a sphere of influence and responsibilities and as such, you are likely to have good interpersonal skills and will be able to work well as part of a team.
- Add a Miscellaneous section if needed. If there is anything else you want a potential employer to know about you – language or special computer skills, family, hobbies, ability to relocate, openness to traveling in the job, etc. – add it here to highlight it rather than bury it in the other content. If you are in doubt about whether to add something, ask yourself if it will make a hiring authority more or less likely to contact you.

Final Review

- Avoid large, complicated or unusual words. The only person who will be impressed by that is you.
- Look for errors in grammar, spelling, spacing and punctuation.
- Review the document for any errors in dates, facts and figures. You don't want a simple error to be perceived as a lie by a hiring authority who happens to know the facts.
- Examine the lay-out –is it pleasing to the eye? Is there enough white space? Is the text too dense?
- Print it out and have it reviewed by someone else and ask for input.



The Cover Letter

The objective of the cover letter is to tell the employer that you are the right person for the job. Review the skills and qualities needed in the job as you think about wording the cover letter.

- **Make sure your name, address and phone numbers are on the cover letter so that if it gets separated from your resume, you can still be identified.**
- **Show in your cover letter that you have researched the company and point out some parallels between what you have to bring to the position and what they need.**
- **Don't rehash your resume but relate any achievements or experiences particularly relevant to the company or the position.**
- **Show some passion or excitement for the company or the opportunity.**
- **Keep the letter short and focused, don't ramble, maybe 5-6 paragraphs at the most.**