

Resume Tips

1. Analyze ads and job descriptions to identify key words
2. Instead of just listing your achievements , present them as challenges or problems solved, indicating what you did when something was wrong or needed fixing.
3. If you include a goal or an objective statement, indicate what you hope to do for the company rather than what the company can do for you.
4. In the experience section, state achievements or accomplishments, not just duties or responsibilities.
5. Consider quantifying your achievements (using dollar amounts, percentages, etc.) to make their value more visible.
6. Be consistent with your use of line/character spacing
7. Prioritize the content of your resume
8. Use a design that grabs attention
9. Make the margins uniform in width and preferably no less than an inch
10. Ensure your cover letter and resume are **error free**

1. Know the purpose of your resume

Some people write a resume as if the purpose of the document was to land a job. As a result they end up with a really long and boring piece that makes them look like desperate job hunters. The objective of your resume is to land an interview, and the interview will land you the job (hopefully!).

2. Back up your qualities and strengths

Instead of creating a long (and boring) list with all your qualities (e.g., disciplined, creative, problem solver) try to connect them with real life and work experiences. In other words, you need to back these qualities and strengths up, else it will appear that you are just trying to inflate things.

3. Make sure to use the right keywords

Most companies (even smaller ones) are already using digital databases to search for candidates. This means that the HR department will run search queries based on specific keywords. Guess what, if your resume doesn't have the keywords related to the job you are applying for, you will be out even before the game starts.

These keywords will usually be nouns. Check the job description and related job ads for a clue on what the employer might be looking for. You can read more about resume keywords on the article [Tapping the Power of Keywords to Enhance Your Resume's Effectiveness](#).

4. Use effective titles

Like it or not, employers will usually make a judgment about your resume in 5 seconds. Under this time frame the most important aspect will be the titles that you listed on the resume, so make sure they grab the attention. Try to be as descriptive as possible, giving the employer a good idea about the nature of your past work experiences. For example:

Bad title: Accounting

Good title: Management of A/R and A/P and Recordkeeping

5. Proofread it twice

It would be difficult to emphasize the importance of proofreading your resume. One small typo and your chances of getting hired could slip. Proofreading it once is not enough, so do it twice, three times or as many as necessary. If you don't know how to proofread effectively, here are [8 tips that you can use](#).

6. Use bullet points

No employer will have the time (or patience) to read long paragraphs of text. Make sure, therefore, to use bullet points and short sentences to describe your experiences, educational background and professional objectives.

7. Where are you going?

Including professional goals can help you by giving employers an idea of where you are going, and how you want to arrive there. You don't need to have a special section devoted to your professional objectives, but overall the resume must communicate it. The question of whether or not to highlight your career objectives on the resume is a polemic one among HR managers, so go with your feeling. If you decide to list them, make sure they are not generic.

8. Put the most important information first

This point is valid both to the overall order of your resume, as well as to the individual sections. Most of the times your previous work experience will be the most important part of the resume, so put it at the top. When describing your experiences or skills, list the most important ones first.

9. Attention to the typography

First of all make sure that your fonts are big enough. The smaller you should go is 11 points, but 12 is probably safer. Do not use capital letters all over the place, remember that your goal is to communicate a message as fast and as clearly as possible. Arial and Times are good choices.

10. Do not include "no kidding" information

There are many people that like to include statements like "Available for interview" or "References available upon request." If you are sending a resume to a company, it should be given that you are available for an interview and that you will provide references if requested. Just avoid items that will make the employer think "no kidding!"

11. Explain the benefits of your skills

Merely stating that you can do something will not catch the attention of the employer. If you manage to explain how it will benefit his company, and to connect it to tangible results, then you will greatly improve your chances.

12. Avoid negativity

Do not include information that might sound negative in the eyes of the employer. This is valid both to your resume and to interviews. You don't need to include, for instance, things that you hated about your last company.

13. Achievements instead of responsibilities

Resumes that include a long list of “responsibilities included...” are plain boring, and not efficient in selling yourself. Instead of listing responsibilities, therefore, describe your professional achievements.

14. No pictures

Sure, we know that you are good looking, but unless you are applying for a job where the physical traits are very important (e.g., modeling, acting and so on), and unless the employer specifically requested it, you should avoid attaching your picture to the resume.

15. Use numbers

This tip is a complement to the 13th one. If you are going to describe your past professional achievements, it would be a good idea to make them as solid as possible. Numbers are your friends here. Don't merely mention that you increased the annual revenues of your division, say that you increased them by \$100,000, by 78%, and so on.

16. One resume for each employer

One of the most common mistakes that people make is to create a standard resume and send it to all the job openings that they can find. Sure it will save you time, but it will also greatly decrease the chances of landing an interview (so in reality it could even represent a waste of time). Tailor your resume for each employer. The same point applies to your cover letters.

17. Identify the problems of the employer

A good starting point to tailor your resume for a specific employer is to identify what possible problems he might have at hand. Try to understand the market of the company you are applying for a job, and identify what kind of difficulties they might be going through. After that illustrate on your resume how you and your skills would help to solve those problems.

18. Avoid age discrimination

It is illegal to discriminate people because of their age, but some employers do these considerations nonetheless. Why risk the trouble? Unless specifically requested, do not include your age on your resume.

19. You don't need to list all your work experiences

If you have job experiences that you are not proud of, or that are not relevant to the current opportunity, you should just omit them. Mentioning that you used to sell hamburgers when you were 17 is probably not going to help you land that executive position.

20. Go with what you got

If you never had any real working experience, just include your summer jobs or volunteer work. If you don't have a degree yet, mention the title and the estimated date for completion. As long as those points are relevant to the job in question, it does not matter if they are *official* or not.

21. Sell your fish

Remember that you are trying to sell yourself. As long as you don't go over the edge, all the marketing efforts that you can put in your resume (in its content, design, delivery method and so on) will give you an advantage over the other candidates.

22. Don't include irrelevant information

Irrelevant information such as political affiliation, religion and sexual preference will not help you. In fact it might even hurt your chances of landing an interview. Just skip it.

23. Use Mr. and Ms. if appropriate

If you have a gender neutral name like Alex or Ryan make sure to include the Mr. or Ms. prefix, so that employers will not get confused about your gender.

24. No lies, please

Seems like a no brainer, but you would be amused to discover the amount of people that lie in their resumes. Even small lies should be avoided. Apart from being wrong, most HR departments do background checks these days, and if you are busted it might ruin your credibility for good.

25. Keep the salary in mind

The image you will create with your resume must match the salary and responsibility level that you are aiming for.

26. Analyze job ads

You will find plenty of useful information on job ads. Analyze not only the ad that you will be applying for, but also those from companies on the same segment or offering related positions. You should be able to identify what profile they are looking for and how the information should be presented.

27. Get someone else to review your resume

Even if you think your resume is looking kinky, it would be a good idea to get a second and third opinion about it. We usually become blind to our own mistakes or way of reasoning, so another person will be in a good position to evaluate the overall quality of your resume and make appropriate suggestions.

28. One or two pages

The ideal length for a resume is a polemic subject. Most employers and recruiting specialists, however, say that it should contain one or two pages at maximum. Just keep in mind that, provided all the necessary information is there, the shorter your resume, the better.

29. Use action verbs

A very common advice to job seekers is to use action verbs. But what are they? Action verbs are basically verbs that will get noticed more easily, and that will clearly communicate what your experience or achievement were. Examples include managed, coached, enforced and planned. Here you can find a complete list of [action verbs divided by skill category](#).

30. Use a good printer

If you are going to use a paper version of your resume, make sure to use a decent printer. Laser printers usually get the job done. Plain white paper is the preferred one as well.

31. No hobbies

Unless you are 100% sure that some of your hobbies will support your candidacy, avoid mentioning them. I know you are proud of your swimming team, but share it with your friends and not with potential employers.

32. Update your resume regularly

It is a good idea to update your resume on a regular basis. Add all the new information that you think is relevant, as well as courses, training programs and other academic qualifications that you might receive along the way. This is the best way to keep track of everything and to make sure that you will not end up sending an obsolete document to the employer.

33. Mention who you worked with

If you have reported or worked with someone that is well known in your industry, it could be a good idea to mention it on the resume. The same thing applies to presidents and CEOs. If you reported to or worked directly with highly ranked executives, add it to the resume.

34. No scattered information

Your resume must have a clear focus. It would cause a negative impression if you mentioned that one year you were studying drama, and the next you were working as an accountant. Make sure that all the information you will include will work towards a unified image. Employers like decided people.

35. Make the design flow with white space

Do not jam your resume with text. Sure we said that you should make your resume as short and concise as possible, but that refers to the overall amount of information and not to how much text

you can pack in a single sheet of paper. White space between the words, lines and paragraphs can improve the legibility of your resume.

36. Lists all your positions

If you have worked a long time for the same company (over 10 years) it could be a good idea to list all the different positions and roles that you had during this time separately. You probably had different responsibilities and developed different skills on each role, so the employer will like to know it.

37. No jargon or slang

It should be common sense, but believe me, it is not. Slang should never be present in a resume. As for technical jargon, do not assume that the employer will know what you are talking about. Even if you are sending your resume to a company in the same segment, the person who will read it for the first time might not have any technical expertise.

38. Careful with sample resume templates

There are many websites that offer free resume templates. While they can help you to get an idea of what you are looking for, do not just copy and paste one of the most used ones. You certainly don't want to look just like any other candidate, do you?

39. Create an email proof formatting

It is very likely that you will end up sending your resume via email to most companies. Apart from having a Word document ready to go as an attachment, you should also have a text version of your resume that does not look disfigured in the body of the email or in online forms. Attachments might get blocked by spam filters, and many people just prefer having the resume on the body of the email itself.

40. Remove your older work experiences

If you have been working for 20 years or more, there is no need to have 2 pages of your resume listing all your work experiences, starting with the job at the local coffee shop at the age of 17! Most experts agree that the last 15 years of your career are enough.

41. No fancy design details

Do not use a colored background, fancy fonts or images on your resume. Sure, you might think that the little flowers will cheer up the document, but other people might just throw it away at the sight.

42. No pronouns

Your resume should not contain the pronouns “I” or “me.” That is how we normally structure sentences, but since your resume is a document about your person, using these pronouns is actually redundant.

43. Don't forget the basics

The first thing on your resume should be your name. It should be bold and with a larger font than the rest of the text. Make sure that your contact details are clearly listed. Secondly, both the name and contact details should be included on all the pages of the resume (if you have more than one).

44. Consider getting professional help

If you are having a hard time to create your resume, or if you are receiving no response whatsoever from companies, you could consider hiring a professional resume writing service. There are both local and online options available, and usually the investment will be worth the money.

Tip 1 - Use Titles or Headings That Match The Jobs You Want

With employers receiving hundreds of resumes you must make sure that your resume hooks an employer's attention within a 5-second glance. A great way to do this is to use job titles and skill headings that relate to and match the jobs you want. For example, compare the headings Roger used in his before resume to the headings used in his after resume.

Before Resume:

Accounting / Recordkeeping
Administrative
Computer Skills

After Resume:

Management of A/R and A/P Accounts
Computerized Accounting Applications
Departmental Administration / Recordkeeping

Which set of headings are the strongest for an Accounts Payable / Receivable Manager position?

Even though Roger's title was Accounting Assistant, he actually managed over 1,000 A/R and A/P accounts. Using skill headings that market the true nature of Roger's job duties will generate him more interviews and higher salary offers. For more examples, like this one and the ones discussed below, click [NEW - 180 resume branding and writing tips!](#)

Tip 2 - Use Design That Grabs Attention

Employers make snap judgments when glancing at your resume. If they see unrelated job titles or skills the likelihood is very high that they will make an immediate assumption that you are not qualified for the job you want. Adding to this problem is the fact that employers don't have the time to read through each of your job descriptions to determine if you have the skills they need.

You Must Do That For Them! The design of your resume must highlight the most important information about your work experience, skills and education. At first glance this information forms the image that employers have of your skills and abilities.

Tip 3 - Create Content That Sells

Resume design should get attention but it's really the content of your resume, the descriptions you include of your skills and abilities, that determine how many interviews you generate--as well as the level of salary offers you receive. Compare the before and after statements from Roger's resume shown below:

Before Resume:

Maintained records for accounts receivable and accounts payable accounts.

After Resume:

Managed over 1,000 accounts receivable and payable accounts working directly with the Chief Financial Officer.

Which of these examples presents Roger as being more qualified, having higher skills and worth a higher salary? As this example illustrates, our image of Roger is changed and elevated when we read the after example. For more examples of how to create powerful content click on [60 Free Online Resume and Job Search Workshops.](#)

Tip 4 - Quantify and Use Power Words

As Roger's after statement demonstrates, using numbers to describe your achievements and responsibilities can greatly expand and elevate your image. Using numbers and quantifying creates vivid images in our mind when we read them, whereas general statements like the before examples are easy to skip over or forget. Typically the more specific you can be in describing your duties the better.

Another strategy that is extremely important in controlling the image that employers develop about you--is to use Power Words or verbs that match the level of position you want. For example, Roger wants to use the experience he's gained to move into a management position. To strengthen his image he should use as many "management oriented" words as possible. Which example below do you think is the strongest?

Typical Verbs:

Gave work assignments to staff of entry level accounting clerks.

Power Words:

Directed workflow, supervised and trained accounting staff performing posting to general ledger, accounts receivable and payable accounts.

Tip 5 - Analyze Ads and Job Descriptions to Identify Key Words

Learning how to analyze the key words that employers provide in help wanted ads and job descriptions is a key element in creating powerful resumes. For example, read the ad Roger found for an Accounts Receivable Manager below and see how many key words, phrases, or skill descriptions that it includes.

Accounts Receivable Manager

Seeking experienced A/R Manager to oversee accounts, manage billing and collections, train accounting and clerical staff, develop status reports for management and prepare monthly balance sheets. B.A. Degree or A.A. Degree with minimum of 2 years experience required.

Even though this ad is small it contains 12-13 key words or phrases that should be addressed in Roger's resume. Roger can also key words from an ad like this to create headings for his resume such as:

Key Word Skill Headings

Management of A/R Accounts

Billing and Collections

Supervision of Accounting and Administrative Staff

Balance Sheet and Management Status Reports

Tip 6 - Identify and Solve Employer's Hidden Needs

In addition to the skills or needs listed in the ad shown above, the employer will have many more needs that Roger should identify and address in his resume and cover letter. For example, this employer will need someone who can deal effectively with other departments, research accounting issues and records to solve problems. To beat today's heavy competition for jobs, it's important that you identify and anticipate the full range of needs each employer faces and show how you can solve those needs.

Tip 7 - Sell the Benefits of Your Skills

Most resumes provide a list of duties that each applicant has been responsible for--without explaining the benefit of those skills to employers. For example, a secretary's resume might state she can type 80 wpm and is extremely accurate. This statement lacks an explanation of how her typing speed and accuracy benefit an employer's bottom line. The real benefit is that the employee can produce more work and ultimately save the employer money. A better statement for this person's resume would be:

Selling The Benefits of Skills

- Achieved top production volume by maintaining high degree of accuracy with typing speed at 80 wpm.
- Cut labor expense over \$6,000 annually by eliminating the need for part-time wordprocessing staff.

Tip 8 - Create An Image That Matches The Salary You Want

As you write your resume, keep in mind the level of job and salary you want. Be sure to create an image that presents you at the appropriate level. For example, language used in a resume for an \$8 an hour position is much different than the language used for a \$16 an hour position. I recently met Lynn, who had held a Health Insurance Claims Management position making \$42,000 per year. She had retrained for the accounting field and hadn't yet gained any "direct accounting experience" although she had prepared monthly accounting reports as a Department Manager.

I was appalled when she shared the resume she had been counseled to create. It began with this statement:

Seeking an entry level position in the accounting field.

Now what pay rate do you think this statement would motivate employers to offer Lynn? A much better statement would be:

Seek an Accounting position utilizing my experience:

- **Managing a department and accounting for up to \$250,000 in monthly claims.**

My goal is to help people either stay at their current salary level or move up--not go backwards. As you can see, the last statement greatly elevates Lynn's image and will be much more likely to generate salary offers comparable to her last pay rate.

Tip 9 - Prioritize the Content of Your Resume

Another big mistake that job seekers make is to list very important data in the lower sections of their job descriptions. As you compile statements for your resume, prioritize them by importance, impressiveness and relevance to the job you want. Remember that a strong statement which uses power words and quantifies will affect every statement under it. Read the two examples below. Which one has the most impact?

Unprioritized

Maintained records control, filing, office supply purchasing and equipment maintenance.
Managed front office functions to support the President, Vice President and staff of 20 Sales Representatives.

Prioritized

Managed front office functions to support the President, Vice President and staff of 20 Sales Representatives. Maintained records control, filing, office supply purchasing and equipment maintenance.

Tip 10 - Tweak and Target Your Resumes and Cover Letters

You will generate many more interviews by tweaking your resume and cover letter so that they address the specific skills each employer requests. For example, Sally originally wanted a customer service position, then found an ad for a Retail Management opening. How well qualified do the headings in the left hand column present her for the Retail Management position? Do you think the headings in the right hand column will generate more and better interviews for Retail Management positions?

Customer Service
Cash Accountability
Computer Skills

Retail Management / Customer Service
Cash Accountability / Supervision of Retail Stations
Retail Accounting Applications

Sally's actual title had been Lead Cashier, even though she managed her own retail cashiering station in addition to 6 other cashiers and stations. Once Sally had created her original resume, it only took about 5 minutes to tweak and relabel her skill descriptions to fit Retail Management positions. This "relabeling" is entirely truthful and is extremely important in landing more interviews because it allows job seekers to apply for, and look qualified for, a wider range of jobs.