

Best Practices for Resume Writing



Career
Services

DIVISION OF STUDENT AFFAIRS

AN “OBJECTIVE” OR “SUMMARY” SECTION?

- Use an Objective if you are a current student, recent graduate or new professional; An objective should focus on 3 ideas: What position you are seeking, What industry or environment do you prefer, What skills you are offering the employer
- Use a Summary if you have several years of full-time professional experience. This serves as a “mini verbal business card” that details your background, strengths, most marketable skills and important personality traits.

BE TARGETED

Offer only the specific qualifications you have to best perform the job advertised. Use a customized resume for every job title. If you choose to use a general resume than customize your cover letter to the position.

EMPHASIZE RELEVANT RESULTS

- Action + goal
- Action + skill developed
- Action + result

Think about how you (1) improved the work process, (2) helped increase the quality or reduced the cost of a product or service that the organization delivers, (3) may have thoroughly satisfied a customer, (4) helped increase the sales or profits of the organization or a particular event, (5) did something that was of value to others, (6) learned valuable skills that are transferable to any work environment, (7) contributed to the organization's goals, and/or (8) demonstrated that you were recognized for your achievements or contributions.

USE ACTION VERBS AND KEY WORDS

Start each sentence with a descriptive action verb (directed, organized, created, planned, etc.). They add power to your sentences. Using past tense verbs implies that you “have done it” before. This reassures employers you can do it for them. Do not use personal pronouns (I, you, he, she, etc.).

BE COMPLETE AND MAKE POINTS SUCCINCTLY

Do not abbreviate or use acronyms. Spell out street addresses, names of schools, business terms, and titles. Employers may not recognize what the letters stand for. Complete sentences are not necessary in resume writing; it is better to use bulleted simple descriptive statements to make a point. Eliminate redundancies.

ONE PAGE IS BEST

Employers state resumes get less than a 15-30 second glance, so say exactly what you mean, using the smallest number of words to make the point. Be a skillful editor!

VISUALLY APPEALING

The formatting of your resume must be kept consistent, sharp, and professional. Make it reader friendly. A crammed, cramped resume often goes unread. Use white space effectively.

DO NOT LIE!

Employers stated that over 50% try to exaggerate their skills, which is almost always uncovered during interviews and reference checks.

BE PERFECT

This is the number one mistake made by job hunters. Your resume must be FLAWLESS. No spelling errors, mistakes or typos. Do not trust spell check. Make sure sentences are concise with adequate space between points. Make deletions wherever necessary.

DO NOT ADVERTISE NEGATIVE INFORMATION

The resume is the wrong place to advertise that you were laid off, fired, or had an extended illness.

FINAL TEST

Are you getting interviews? Are employers calling? This is evidence that your resume is working.

DO NOT INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:

Pictures of yourself, References, Personal information such as birth date, height, weight etc. Anything political or religious can be used to judge you unfairly. Good idea to forego this involvement or at least make it neutral.



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