

How to build a Resume that Works

The job of a resume is to obtain you an interview. In a competitive and increasingly more segmented job market your resume has to work harder than ever before. As people who are involved in screening resumes every day we have identified some of the must haves and things to avoid when building a resume that works.

Tip Be clear in your mind as to what type of work you really want to do and also what type of organisation you want to work for. What will it stand for? What will it be like to work there? How will they treat their staff ?

The Recruiter's Mindset

In order to build your resume, put yourself in the shoes of the person reading it. Here are some points to guide you:

- They will undoubtedly have many more resumes to read than yours, perhaps 30, 50 or more and like everyone else they will probably have time challenges. How will you make your resume stand out from the crowd?
- They will be looking for either someone who has previously carried out a similar position or has the aptitude, skills and desire to fill the position. The later are more difficult to put in writing.
- They are on the lookout for the '*fake it until you make it*' philosophy so be realistic about the positions you apply for and be prepared to back up any claims you make.
- They will be looking for your resume to build a consistent story - eg. are all date periods accounted for and is what you are saying generally believable.
- The person with the most experience is not always the best person for the job. The recruiter will consider other aspects of your personality, aptitudes, attitudes and fit for the organisation

Your Mindset

When critiquing your resume you should try to put yourself in the shoes of the recruiter / employer and ask, *why should you recruit you ?* Use the old sales adage WIIFM (What's in it for me). This is what every employer needs to know. Think more about the benefits you **have** provided to your previous employers rather than the benefits you **can** provide the new organisation. These benefits are what you must communicate.

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Resume Structure

In terms of structure and layout there are many formats available to choose from. Choose a style that is appropriate to the industry, organisation and position you are applying for. The presentation of your resume begins your relationship with the recruiter and their perceptions of who you are. A word of caution – Different recruiters have differing opinions or standards for process and presentation. Government departments particularly may vary from private enterprise. For example some may require black and white text only with pages stapled together. If in doubt ask the question - "Is there a particular format required for my application or resume?"

The key criteria however are:

- Is it easy for the eye to follow ?
- Does it use bold and different size text to successfully separate important information ? (eg sections headings and job titles)
- Does it use bullet points to *keep it brief and relevant* ?
- Does it include a section on achievements for each position?
- Most often it is appropriate to list your job history in reverse chronological order, ie. most recent to earliest.

What to include

Main Details Section

This section includes your name, address and personal details.

Summary Statement

This section is optional. If you can succinctly state a summary of your career to date and your future aspirations this is the place to include it. Sometimes it may be substituted with a vision statement. If you undertaken any career planning and have information about your aptitudes or personality that is relevant to potential employers it could also be included here.

Education

This section includes your education in reverse chronological order (backwards, from most recent).

Other Qualifications

Include here any certificates or short courses that are relevant.

Memberships

List any professional bodies that you belong to.

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Work History

Include here a history of your work experience in reverse chronological order. Each position should include: Dates of employment, employer, position title, responsibilities and achievements.

Skills Summary

This section may be broken down into sub sections eg computers, business management etc

Referees

Contact all referees to let them know they may be contacted

Writing Responsibilities

This exercise requires you to start to clearly and succinctly write down the most important responsibilities in your four most recent positions. Start with the action verbs where possible and avoid acronyms and jargon. This section is largely a reflection of your previous job description in that it tells a potential employer what you were employed to do but not how well you did it.

Writing Achievements

This is where you can set yourself apart from other applicants. The object is to identify your key achievements in terms of benefits to your past employer so that you can demonstrate how well you are likely to achieve future results.

Spend a lot of your resume preparation time reviewing this section. Review it, ask others to review it and ask whether it is likely to inspire a potential employer to meet with you – *what's in it for them*. When you have written this list you must become skilled at recalling each of them and providing back up information and applying it in an interview.

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Use this list of action verbs to start a sentence where possible for both responsibilities and achievements

Analysed	Built	Designed	Expedited	Generated	Judged	Promoted	Verified
Arranged	Bought	Developed	Executed	Guided	Led	Projected	Viewed
Administered	Controlled	Delegated	Estimated	Guarded	Launched	Produced	Wrote
Accomplished	Co-ordinated	Demonstrated	Explained	Hired	Listened	Questioned	Won
Activated	Created	Defined	Evaluated	Helped	Managed	Recommended	
Adjusted	Conducted	Decided	Enlisted	Headed	Maintained	Recruited	
Achieved	Catalogued	Dealt with	Exceeded	Introduced	Monitored	Revised	
Applied	Consolidated	Debated	Empowered	Initiated	Motivated	Rectified	
Attained	Coached	Diagnosed	Edited	Implement	Mediated	Reduced	
Assembled	Communicated	Delivered	Forecasted	Improved	Merged	Succeeded	
Acquired	Computed	Established	Followed up	Instigated	Negotiated	Supervised	
Appraised	Calculated	Expanded	Finalised	Increased	Organised	Systematised	
Assigned	Conceived	Encouraged	Fostered	Instructed	Planned	Taught	
Budgeted	Compiled	Eliminated	Facilitated	Interviewed	Proposed	Trained	

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Worksheet

Resume Information

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Mobile: _____

Summary Statement

Education

Date: _____

Qualification: _____

Obtained from: _____

Date: _____

Qualification: _____

Obtained from: _____

Date: _____

Qualification: _____

Obtained from: _____

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Other Qualifications

date: _____

qualification: _____

obtained from: _____

date: _____

qualification: _____

obtained from: _____

(repeat as necessary)

Memberships

-

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Work History

Career Experience (in reverse chronological order)

Position 1 (most recent)

Dates: from _____ to _____

Company: _____

Responsibilities: _____

Achievements

Achievement 1 _____

Benefit _____

Achievement 2 _____

Benefit _____

Achievement 3 _____

Benefit _____

- ▶ Permanent Recruitment
- ▶ Temporary Recruitment
- ▶ Outplacement
- ▶ Psychometric Testing
- ▶ HR Systems

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Position 2

Dates: from _____ to _____

Company: _____

Responsibilities: _____

Achievements

Achievement 1 _____

Benefit _____

Achievement 2 _____

Benefit _____

Achievement 3 _____

Benefit _____

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Position 3

Dates: from _____ to _____

Company: _____

Responsibilities: _____

Achievements

Achievement 1 _____

Benefit _____

Achievement 2 _____

Benefit _____

Achievement 3 _____

Benefit _____

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Position 4

Dates: from _____ to _____

Company: _____

Responsibilities: _____

Achievements

Achievement 1 _____

Benefit _____

Achievement 2 _____

Benefit _____

Achievement 3 _____

Benefit _____

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Skills Summary

-

Referees

-

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