

Resume Do's and Don'ts

Employers receive hundreds of resumes for a single position. It is important for you to be armed with a resume that catches their attention, and tells them exactly what they need to know by expressing your qualifications in a clear, concise and aesthetically pleasing manner. Here are a few ways to ensure that your resume makes a good first impression and finds its way to the top of the stack.

- **Organization:** The structure of your resume should present your information clearly.
- When developing your resume you should use a chronological format, which will list your jobs (with your achievements and duties for each), and your education in reverse chronological order. This means that if you just graduated from college and have not yet been employed, place your "Education" section first, directly below the letterhead, making sure to include your school name, degree, major, and graduation date. Whereas those who have been in the workforce should list their most recent employment (with dates of employment) first. Employers are familiar with this format, and it will easily show them where your most recent experience has been.
- Other categories you might include are "Language Skills," "Relevant Work Experience," "Computer Skills," "Volunteer Experience," "Publications," "Activities and Honors." Do not include personal information (i.e. hobbies, physical descriptions or your social security number).

- **Appearance:** Along with effective organization, appearance can make or break your resume. Don't forget the importance of fonts, formatting and presentation.
- Fonts. Whether you fax, mail or e-mail your resume to prospective employers, you should keep your font plain and easy to read. Try keeping fonts at 11 to 12 points, and using a legible font like Arial or Times New Roman.
- Formatting. Just because Microsoft Word has all of those formatting capabilities doesn't mean you have to use them. Large fonts, colors, and graphic embellishments can be distracting, so be a minimalist and only use purposeful formatting. Simple bullets are great for separating your duties and skills; and small caps are the perfect way to highlight each job.
- Paper. Even if you don't mail your resume to employers, you should have hard copies on hand to bring to interviews. These copies should be on tasteful resume-quality paper. White, off-white, cream, and gray are the easiest to read.

- **Content:** Now that you have organized your resume, you need to know what to put in it.
- Action words – When describing your prior job experience and duties, use active language. Instead of starting your sentence with a noun, start with an active, descriptive, impressive verb. For example use the words, "assisted, trained, supervised, organized." Make your text proactive and full of energy.
- Numbers – Whenever possible, include numbers, percentages, and dollar amounts in your job descriptions to back up and highlight your achievements. How many people did you supervise? How much did sales increase under your direction?
- Length – Keep it to one page. Less is more, so make your statements concise. Look at your text, see where you get longwinded and pare it down. Your text should flow easily and quickly.

- **References:** Professional references are generally required. Personal references can also be helpful.
- While your references should not be listed on your resume, you should keep a printed list of them handy; as well as a list of your past employers and the dates that you worked for them.

Resume Do's, Don'ts & Maybe's

Do include:

- Your name, street address, telephone number and e-mail address.
- Description of your work history and accomplishments.
- Educational background.
- Professional licenses or certificates.
- Computer skills.

Maybe Include:

- Job objectives and career goal or summary
- Memberships in professional organizations
- Published articles or works
- Job related hobbies
- Military Service
- GPA if 3.0 or above (for recent graduates only)

Don't include:

- Reasons for leaving past jobs
- Past or present salaries
- Religious affiliations
- Race
- Date of birth
- Social Security Number
- Picture