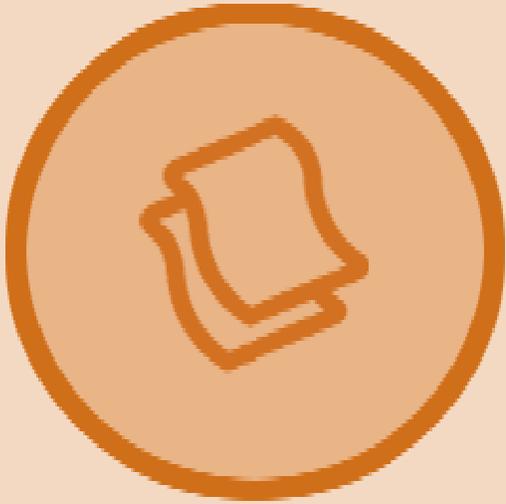# 25 Tips for Resume Writing

Are you suffering from resume-writer's block? Does everyone else's resume seem more professional and better worded than yours? The following are some guidelines to help you create a better resume:

1. Be neat and error free.

Catch all typo's and grammar errors. Make sure someone proofreads your resume, preferably someone attentive to details. Even the smallest error could land your resume in the reject pile.

2. Write a powerful opening statement.

Form a solid, clear opening statement that will help you carry a focused message throughout the resume. The best opening statements summarize your skills and emphasize your strengths.

3. Focus on your benefit to employers.

Focus on highlighting accomplishments that will arouse the interest of employers who read your resume. Answer the question: "How can this candidate fulfill the role and make a positive impact?" Remember that the goal is to get the interview.

4. Make a good first impression.

On average, employers spend less than 30 seconds scanning each resume. Most employers are more concerned about career achievements than education. Place the most interesting and compelling facts about yourself at the beginning, such as a list of accomplishments in order of relevance.

5. Emphasize your skills.

Use a skills or capabilities section in your resume that is organized around the main talents you have to offer. Prioritize everything.

"Portray yourself as active, accomplished, intelligent...."

6. Use keywords.

Include specific keywords and phrases that describe your skills and experience, such as Product Launch, Income Statement, Balance Sheet, Sales, Account Management, C++, Visual Basic, Word Processing, MS Excel, Adobe Illustrator, Graphic Design, and Advertising.

7. Use industry jargon.

Use industry jargon and acronyms to reflect your familiarity with the employer's business, but not to the point where it makes your resume hard to read or understand. Spell out acronyms in parentheses if they are not obvious, such as TQM (Total Quality Management).

8. Use action verbs.

Portray yourself as active, accomplished, intelligent, and capable of contributing. Examples: Managed, Launched, Created, Directed, Established, Organized, and Supervised.

"Never refer to personal information such as race, religion, marital status, age, political party, or even personal views."

9. Avoid personal pronouns.

Never use personal pronouns such as 'I' or 'me' in your resume. Instead of complete sentences, use short Action-Benefit statements, like: "Coordinated and published a weekly newsletter that raised awareness for local community events."

10. Highlight key points.

Use bold, italics, and underlining to highlight the most relevant information on your resume. For ASCII text-only resumes, you may use capital letters, quotation marks, even asterisks, to emphasize important words or section titles.

11. Summarize information.

In your resume, use only the amount of space required to demonstrate your qualifications for the position clearly and succinctly.

12. List only recent information.

The general rule of thumb is to show your work experience only for the last 10 to 15 years, unless there is specific prior experience that is especially relevant to the position you are seeking.

13. Quantify or qualify experience.

Numbers are a powerful tool, and should be included in your Action-Benefit statements. Instead of writing "Responsible for increasing sales in my territory," use "Increased sales in my territory 150% over 6 months. Managed 30 accounts increasing revenues from $1.5M to $2M annually."

"Do not under-emphasize your strengths and experience"

14. Be organized, logical, and concise.

In addition to reviewing your experience, employers also use the resume to sense whether you are organized, logical, and concise. Make sure your resume is balanced, neat, visually appealing, and flows consistently. Clearly separate sections and emphasize section titles. Leave sufficient blank space between sections for easy reading.

15. Just communicate.

Abandon the use of exorbitant, exquisite vocabulary. In other words, don't try to impress employers with the depth of your vocabulary. Use words everyone can understand.

16. Omit salary information.

Never refer to salary in your resume. Save this information for the interview.

17. Avoid questionable subjects.

Never refer to personal information such as race, religion, marital status, age, political party, or even personal views. In all but a few instances, it would be illegal for the employer to consider such issues. Also, avoid the use of humor and clichés in most resumes.

18. Be honest.

Lying or exaggerating your abilities will always come back to haunt you. Since employers usually check into serious candidates, you will want every detail to check out.

19. Sell your strengths.

Do not under-emphasize your strengths and experience. Portray yourself in the best possible light. Skills that seem natural to you, others may never grasp.

20. Write your own resume.

Be personal, yet professional. Create a resume that reflects your best personal characteristics and positive traits.

21. Personal traits.

If you want to include personal traits in your resume, such as "Dependable, Highly-Organized, Self-Motivated, and Responsible," rather than just listing these traits, try demonstrating these characteristics using examples from your experience. For example, instead of writing "Dependable", write "Never missed an important deadline in five years as a project manager."

22. Position yourself in the best possible light.

To de-emphasize glaring gaps in your work history, consider using a Functional resume, which focuses on your skills and accomplishments rather than a Chronological format, which emphasizes the progression of your experience.

23. Combine sections when possible.

Try to combine any short sections together to make your resume more compact. For example, if you only have one entry under training,

"Create a resume that reflects your best personal characteristics and positive traits."

consider placing it under your education instead and change the section title to "Education and Training".

24. Use common section headings.

Use common section headings. Examples: Objective, Experience, Employment, Work History, Skills, Summary, Summary of Qualifications, Accomplishments, Achievements, Capabilities, Education, Professional Affiliations, Publications, Licenses and Certifications, and Honors.

25. Be positive.

Remove any negative comments or feelings conveyed in your resume, especially when it comes to previous employment experiences. Emphasize a positive, can-do attitude.

"Numbers are a powerful tool, and should be included in your Action-Benefit statements."