

43 Resume Tips - How to **WOW!!** the Hiring Manager



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When you haven't updated your resume in a while, it can be hard to know where to start. What experiences and accomplishments should you include for the jobs you've got your eye on? What new resume rules and trends should you be following? And seriously, one page or two?

Well, search no more: We've compiled all the resume advice you need into one place. Read on for tips and tricks that'll make sure you craft a winning resume—and help you land a jobby wowing the hiring manager!

Telling Your Story

1. Don't Put Everything on There

Your resume should not have every work experience you've ever had listed on it. Think of your resume not as a comprehensive list of your career history, but as a marketing document selling you as the perfect person for the job. For each resume you send out, you'll want to highlight only the accomplishments and skills that are most relevant to the job at hand (even if that means you don't include all of your experience).

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2. But Keep a Master List of All Jobs

Since you'll want to be swapping different information in and out depending on the job you're applying to, keep a resume master list on your computer where you keep any information you've ever included on a resume: old positions, bullet points tailored for different applications, special projects that only sometimes make sense to include. Then, when you're crafting each resume, it's just a matter of cutting and pasting relevant information together.

3. Put the Best Stuff "Above the Fold"

In marketing speak, "above the fold" refers to what you see on the front half of a folded newspaper (or, in the digital age, before you scroll down on a website), but basically it's your first impression of a document. In resume speak, it means you should make sure your best experiences and accomplishments are visible on the top third of your resume. This top section is what the hiring manager is going to see first—and what will serve as a hook for someone to keep on reading. So focus on putting your best, most relevant experiences first!

4. Ditch the Objective Statement

The only occasion when an objective section makes sense is when you're making a huge career change and need to explain from the get-go why your experience doesn't match up with the position you're applying to.

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5. Keep it (Reverse) Chronological

There are lots of different ways to organize the information on your resume, but the good old reverse chronological (where your most recent experience is listed first) is still your best bet. Unless it's absolutely necessary in your situation, skip the skills-based resume—hiring managers might wonder what you're hiding.

6. Keep it to a Page

The two- (or more!) page resume - the bottom line is this—you want the information here to be concise, and making yourself keep it to one page is a good way to force yourself to do this. If you *truly* have enough *relevant* and *important* experience, training, and credentials to showcase on more than one page of your resume, then go for it. But if you can tell the same story in less space?

7. Consider an Online Supplement

Can't figure out how to tell your whole story on one page, or want to be able to include some visual examples of your work? Instead of trying to have your resume cover everything, cover the most important details on that document, and then include a link to your personal website, where you can dive more into what makes you the ideal candidate.

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Formatting

8. Keep it Simple

We'll talk about getting creative in order to stand out in a minute. But the most basic principle of good resume formatting and design? Keep it simple. Use a basic but modern font, like Helvetica, Arial, or Century Gothic. Make your resume easy on hiring managers' eyes by using a font size between 10 and 12 and leaving a healthy amount of white space on the page. You can use a different font or typeface for your name, your resume headers, and the companies for which you've worked, but keep it simple and keep it consistent. Your main focus here should be on readability for the hiring manager. That being said, you should feel free to...

9. Carefully Stand Out

Really want your resume stand out from the sea of Times New Roman? Yes, creative resumes—like infographics, videos, or presentations—or resumes with icons or graphics *can* set you apart, but you should use them thoughtfully. If you're applying through an ATS, keep to the standard formatting without any bells and whistles so the computer can read it effectively. If you're applying to a more traditional company, don't get too crazy, but feel free to add some tasteful design elements or a little color to make it pop. No matter what, don't do it unless you're willing to put in the time, creativity, and design work to make it awesome.

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10. Make Your Contact Info Prominent

You don't need to include your address on your resume anymore (really!), but you do need to make sure to include a phone number and professional email address (not your work address!) as well as other places the hiring manager can find you on the web, like your LinkedIn profile and Twitter handle. (Implicit in this is that you keep these social media profiles suitable for prospective employers.)

11. Design for Skimmability

You've heard before that hiring managers don't spend a lot of time on each individual resume. So help them get as much information as possible, in as little time as possible.

12. Get Help From a Professional

Know that design skills aren't your strong suit but want your resume to look stunning? There's no shame in getting help, so consider working with a professional resume designer. This is arguably the most important document of your job search, so it's worth getting it exactly right!

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Work Experience

13. Keep it Recent, Keep it Relevant

As a rule, you should only show the most recent 10-15 years of your career history and only include the experience relevant to the positions to which you are applying. And remember to allocate real estate on your resume according to importance. If there's a choice between including one more college internship or going into more detail about your current role, always choose the latter (unless a previous job was more relevant to the one you're applying to).

14. No Relevant Experience? No Worries!

Don't panic if you don't have any experience that fits the bill. Instead, focus your resume on your relevant and transferrable skills along with any related side or academic projects, and then make sure to pair it with a strong cover letter telling the narrative of why you're ideal for the job.

15. Curate Your Bullet Points

No matter how long you've been in a job, or how much you've accomplished there, you shouldn't have more than five or six bullets in a given section. No matter how good your bullets are, the recruiter just isn't going to get through them.

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16. Bring it Down a Level

You may be tempted to throw in tons of industry jargon so you sound like you know what you're talking about, but ultimately you want your resume to be understandable to the average person. Remember that the first person who sees your resume might be a recruiter, an assistant, or even a high-level executive—and you want to be sure that it is readable, relevant, and interesting to all of them.

17. Give 'Em the Numbers

Use as many facts, figures, and numbers as you can in your bullet points. How many people were impacted by your work? By what percentage did you exceed your goals? By quantifying your accomplishments, you really allow the hiring manager to picture the level of work or responsibility you needed to achieve them.

18. Take it One Step Further

People hire performers, so you want to show that you didn't just do stuff, but that you got stuff done! As you look at your bullet points, think about how you can take each statement one step further and add in what the benefit was to your boss or your company. By doing this, you clearly communicate not only what you're capable of, but also the direct benefit the employer will receive by hiring you. If you're not sure how to explain your impact.

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19. Show—Don't Tell—Your Soft Skills

Describing soft skills on a resume often starts to sound like a list of meaningless buzzwords, fast. But being a “strong leader” or an “effective communicator” are important characteristics you want to get across. Think about how you can demonstrate these attributes in your bullet points without actually saying them.

20. Don't Neglect Non-Traditional Work

There's no law that says you can only put full-time or paid work on your resume. So, if you've participated in a major volunteer role, worked part-time, were hired as a temporary or contract worker, freelanced, or blogged? Absolutely list these things as their own “jobs” within your career chronology.

21. Mix Up Your Word Use

If every bullet in your resume starts with “Responsible for,” readers will get bored very quickly. Don't be afraid to mix it up!

22. Use Keywords

Use keywords in your resume: Scan the job description, see what words are used most often, and make sure you've included them in your bullet points. Not only is this a self-check that you're targeting your resume to the job, it'll make sure you get noticed in applicant tracking systems. Stuck on which words to include?

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23. Avoid Empty Words

What words shouldn't you include? Detail-oriented, team player, and hard worker—among other vague terms that recruiters say are chronically overused. We bet there's a better way to describe how awesome you are.

Education

24. Experience First, Education Second

Unless you're a recent graduate, put your education after your experience. Chances are, your last couple of jobs are more important and relevant to you getting the job than where you went to college.

25. Also Keep it Reverse Chronological

Usually, you should lay down your educational background by listing the most recent or advanced degree first, working in reverse chronological order. But if older coursework is more specific to the job, list that first to grab the reviewer's attention.

26. But Skip the Dates

Don't list your graduation dates. The reviewer cares more about whether or not you have the degree than when you earned it.

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27. Highlight Honors, Not GPA

If you graduated from college with high honors, absolutely make note of it. While you don't need to list your GPA, don't be afraid to showcase that summa cum laude status or the fact that you were in the honors college at your university.

28. Include Continuing or Online Education

Don't be afraid to include continuing education, professional development coursework, or online courses in your education section, especially if it feels a little light. Online courses are a more-than-accepted norm nowadays, and your participation in them can actually show your determination and motivation to get the skills you need for your career.

Skills, Awards, and Interests

29. List Out Your Skills

Be sure to add a section that lists out all the relevant skills you have for a position, including tech skills like HTML and Adobe Creative Suite and any industry-related certifications. Just make sure to skip including skills that everyone is expected to have, like using email or Microsoft Word. Doing so will actually make you seem *less* technologically savvy.

30. Divvy Them Up

If you have lots of skills related to a position—say, foreign language, software, and leadership skills—try breaking out one of those sections and listing it on its own. Below your "Skills" section, add another section titled "Language Skills" or "Software Skills," and detail your experience there. Again—we're going for skimmability here, folks!

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31. Show Some Personality

Feel free to include an “Interests” section on your resume, but only add those that are relevant to the job. Are you a guitar player with your eye on a music company? Definitely include it. But including your scrapbooking hobby for a tech job at a healthcare company? Don’t even think about it.

32. Beware of Interests That Could Be Controversial

Maybe you help raise money for your church on the reg. Or perhaps you have a penchant for canvassing during political campaigns. Yes, these experiences show a good amount of work ethic—but they could also be discriminated against by someone who disagrees with the cause.

33. Strut Your Stuff

Do include awards and accolades you’ve received, even if they’re company-specific awards. Just state what you earned them for, e.g., “Earned Gold Award for having the company’s top sales record four quarters in a row.” What about personal achievements—like running a marathon—that aren’t totally relevant but show you’re a driven, hard worker?

Gaps and Other Sticky Resume Situations

34. Kill the Short-Term Jobs

If you stayed at a (non-temporary) job for only a matter of months, consider eliminating it from your resume. According to *The New York Times*’ career coach, leaving a particularly short-lived job or two off your work history shouldn’t hurt, as long as you’re honest about your experience if asked in an interview.

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35. Deal with the Gaps

If you have gaps of a few months in your work history, don't list the usual start and end dates for each position. Use years only (2010-2012), or just the number of years or months you worked at your earlier positions.

36. Explain Serial Job Hopping

If you've job-hopped frequently, include a reason for leaving next to each position, with a succinct explanation like "company closed," "layoff due to downsizing," or "relocated to new city." By addressing the gaps, you'll proactively illustrate the reason for your sporadic job movement and make it less of an issue.

37. Explain a Long Break in Jobs

Re-entering the workforce after a long hiatus? This is the perfect opportunity for a summary statement at the top, outlining your best skills and accomplishments. Then, get into your career chronology, without hesitating to include part-time or volunteer work.

38. Don't Try to Get Cute

Don't try to creatively fill in gaps on your resume. For example, if you took time out of the workforce to raise kids, don't list your parenting experience on your resume, à la "adeptly managed the growing pile of laundry" (we've seen it). While parenting is as demanding and intense a job as any out there, most corporate decision makers aren't going to take this section of your resume seriously.

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Finishing Touches

39. Ditch “References Available Upon Request”

If a hiring manager is interested in you, he or she will ask you for references—and will assume that you have them. There's no need to address the obvious (and doing so might even make you look a little presumptuous!).

40. Proofread, Proofread, Proofread

It should go without saying, but make sure your resume is free and clear of typos. And don't rely on spell check and grammar check alone—ask family or friends to take a look at it for you (or ask a recruiter to help you).

41. Save it as a PDF

If emailing your resume, make sure to always send a PDF rather than a .doc. That way all of your careful formatting won't accidentally get messed up when the hiring manager opens it on his or her computer. To make sure it won't look wonky when you send it off.

42. Name Your File Smartly

Ready to save your resume and send it off? Save it as “Jane Smith Resume” instead of “Resume.” It's one less step the hiring manager has to take.

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43. Constantly Refresh It

Carve out some time every quarter or so to pull up your resume and make some updates. Have you taken on new responsibilities? Learned new skills? Add them in. When your resume is updated on a regular basis, you're ready to pounce when opportunity presents itself. And, even if you're not job searching, there are plenty of good reasons to keep this document in tip-top shape.

Need More Helpful Info?

Need more helpful info - or maybe you are a hiring manager looking to hire staff - please feel free to contact us!