Creating an Effective Resume

A resume should highlight your experience, qualifications and skills - organised in a way that is easy to understand and follow. Your resume should contain the following details:

Your Full Name and Contact Details

Including fixed address, correct contact telephone numbers and e-mail address.

You should not include information such as health, religion, nationality, marital status and age.

Career Objective

An objective tells potential employers the sort of work you are hoping to do.

- Be specific and realistic about what you want.

- Tailor your objective to suit each employer or to target the role you are applying for.

Employment History

- Dates of employment - start from the most recent job and work backwards.

- Title of position, name of organisation and location.

- Describe your work responsibilities, with an emphasis on specific skills and achievements.

Education and Training

- Name of institution or training provider and state or country attended.

- The resulting qualification / skills obtained.

- Date that the qualification was obtained or when the training occured.

References

Include at least two referees along with their contact information (don't forget to ask your referees permission first and check how they would prefer to be contacted). It is also a good idea to chat to them about the company or role you are applying for.

If you prefer not to list your referees on your resume, you should note under the reference heading "Available on request".

Additional Information (Optional)

- Memberships for professional institutes.

- Organisations you are a member of, such as volunteer organisations or sporting clubs.

- Specific licences / permits applicable to your industry.

- Achievements and accreditations, plus copies of certifications to verify qualifications (if applicable).

Content Tips

You do not need to list your entire work history. The last 10-15 years should be sufficient (depending on the number of positions held during this time).

A summary of responsibilities and tasks performed is only recommended for the past 7-10 years work history. Any positions held after this period should be listed only. If you need to give additional information about the position, a brief summary (max. 2-3 lines) is acceptable.

If you have worked for the same organisation for an extended period (10+ years), list the position titles you have held during this time and give a brief summary of your responsibilities, skills and achievements, rather than list them for each role.

Never lie or embellish the truth.

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Format and Presentation Tips

- Print your resume on white paper, not coloured.

- Use a font size of 11-12 points. Choose one font type and use it consistently.

- Use bold for headings and avoid italics, underline and decorative fonts.

- Don't use graphics or fancy layouts - they can distract readers and look unprofessional.

- Always check your resume for spelling and grammar.

- Keep your resume short, clear and to-the-point (3 - 5 pages in length).

- Present your resume in Word format only when e-mailing or applying on-line. Do not use other formats, as the reader may not have the programs to be able to view these files.

- When presenting your resume in person or by mail, try using a presentation folder.

- Never fold your resume.

How to Make Your Resume Stand Out

In many cases, you only have 60-90 seconds to catch the readers attention before they move on to the next applicant, therefore the words you use and how you present them are critical.

- Make sure it is professional and visually appealing.

- Use skills headings that match the job you are applying for.

- Write a cover letter and highlight in bold any specific skills and qualifications that you want to catch the reader's eye. You could also use this method in your resume.

- Don't list every task performed in your role; summarise by separating them into categories.

- Use bullet points and minor headings to allow the reader to scan-read your resume.

- Continuously update your information.

Examples of Using Power Phrases

Power phrases are an excellent way to demonstrate your suitability for the role, personality, and state your career objectives. In order to highlight your proven ability, try to qualify each statement emphasising the results you achieved within the role and/or specific project. For example:

Replace *'I AM VERY ORGANISED"* with: *'I'm able to work effectively with little or no supervision to minimise production downtime'.*

Replace *'PROJECT MANAGEMENT EXPERIENCE'* with: *'Proven product, delivering projects to deadlines and within budgets."*

Replace *'I AM ANALYTICAL'* with: *"I am excellent at analysing data and transforming it into useful information."*

It's important to highlight keywords and acronyms that are relevant to the employer and the role, but never use examples where you don't have experience or comphrensive knowldege. You don't want to get caught out at the interview as you will lose credibility.

Using Action Words in Your Resume

Replace:
Job Title: Bookkeeper
Responsibilities
- Maintain accounts payable records.

- Maintain accounts receivable records.

- Allocate work and manage the accounting clerks.

With...
Job Title: Accounting / Bookkeeping
Responsibilities
- Managing over 1,000 Accounts Payable and Receivable using computerised accounting applications and working directly with the Chief Financial Officer.

- Directing workflow, supervising and training accounting staff and managing staff performance in general ledger, accounts payable, accounts receivable and accounting administration tasks.