

# Best Practices for Resume Writing

## Five Ways to Make Your Resume Stand Out

- Respond Directly to the Job Description
- Describe Accomplishments, Not Responsibilities
- Quantify Your Accomplishments
- Use the Summary Section for Distinguishing Details
- Ignore Irrelevant Information



### “OBJECTIVE” OR “SUMMARY”

- Use an **Objective** if you are a recent graduate or new professional
  - An objective should focus on 3 ideas: what position you are seeking, what industry or environment you prefer, what skills you are offering the employer
- Use a **Summary** if you have several years of full-time professional experience.
  - This serves as a “mini verbal business card” that details your background, strengths, most marketable skills, and important personality traits

### BE TARGETED

Offer only the specific qualifications you need to best perform the job advertised. Use a customized resume for every job title. If you choose to use a general resume, then customize your cover letter to each position.

### EMPHASIZE RESULTS

- Action + goal
- Action + skill developed
- Action + result

*Think about how you* (1) **improved the work process**, (2) **helped increase the quality or reduced the cost of a product or service that the organization delivers**, (3) **may have thoroughly satisfied a customer**, (4) **helped increase the sales or profits of the organization or a particular event**, (5) **did something that was of value to others**, (6) **learned valuable skills that are transferable to any work environment**, (7) **contributed to the organization's goals**, and/or (8) **demonstrated that you were recognized for your achievements or contributions**.

### **USE ACTION VERBS AND KEYWORDS**

Start each sentence with a descriptive action verb (directed, organized, created, planned, etc.). They add power to your sentences. Using past tense verbs implies that you “have done it” before. This reassures employers you can do it for them. Do not use personal pronouns (I, you, he, she, etc.).

### **BE COMPLETE AND MAKE POINTS FAST**

Do not abbreviate or use acronyms. Spell out street addresses, names of schools, business terms, and titles. Employers may not recognize what the letters stand for. Complete sentences are not necessary in resume writing - it is better to use bulleted, simple descriptive statements to make a point.

### **ONE PAGE IS BEST**

Employers state resumes get less than a 15-30 second glance, so say exactly what you mean, using the smallest number of words to make the point.

### **VISUALLY APPEALING**

The formatting of your resume should be kept consistent, sharp, and professional. Make it reader friendly. A crammed, cramped resume often goes unread.

### **DO NOT ADVERTISE NEGATIVE INFORMATION**

The resume is the wrong place to advertise that you were laid off, fired, or had an extended illness.

### **ONLY INCLUDE REQUIRED INFORMATION**

Do not include items such as pictures of yourself, references, or personal information such as birth date, height, weight, etc.