Resume writing styles and principles

The 3 R's of resume writing

Studies have shown employers and hiring managers spend approximately 5 to 6 seconds to decide whether a resume should or should not progress to the next stage.

1. **Revealing** – What does it reveal about you to the employer?
2. **Recency** – Does it highlight your most recent skills, experience and training?
3. **Relevance** – Is it tailored to match the selection criteria for the job?

Presentation

Does your resume look professional? Is it easy to read?

Format and Language

Are your fonts and font styles easy to read? Have you used simple English and industry based language?

Length and Sequence

No more than 2-4 pages. Is your resume in logical order? Does it include the most recent and relevant information first?

Detail

Have you included achievements and or projects that show your unique skills and experience?

Individualised

Have you reviewed and adapted your resume to meet the requirements for each job application?

Resume styles

There many different resume formats and structures and all come with advantages and disadvantages.

THE CHRONOLOGICAL RESUME

Moves back through time, highlighting most recent experience and showing the progression of your skills, responsibilities and experience.

Advantages
- ▶ Clearly presents your accomplishments and diversity of skills and experience
- ▶ Can be highlighted in the form of an 'achievements' section on your resume
- ▶ Provides a chance to stand out with achievements – Employers love it

Disadvantages
- ▶ Not ideal if you have had numerous job changes, experiences in many different sectors, and lack of achievements or progression

This format is good for people
- ▶ With all levels of work experience
- ▶ Looking for jobs in a field similar to their work experience
- ▶ Without large gaps in their work history
- ▶ Applying in a more traditional industry (accounting, finance, engineering jobs)

THE FUNCTIONAL RESUME

Focuses more directly on your skills and potential.

Advantages
- Allows you to offer your skills and link it to company and your goals moving forward
- Employers can see your future potential as well as your existing employability and soft skills

Disadvantages
- Viewed critically - style often highlights a lack of experience and diversity of skills
- Requires more effort for tailoring to meet employer's expectation and suitability

This format is good for people
- With high levels of work experience
- Making a career change to a field unrelated to their work experience
- With unusually large gaps in their work history
- Applying for more creative role – designs, architect, programmers

THE COMBINATION RESUME – MOST PREFERRED

Ideal when attempting to combine key sections of both the chronological and functional resume.

Advantages
- Can show multiple skills sets, transferrable skills and diverse employment history
- Within a combination resume it is important to focus on:
  - your career summary or profile
  - the description of all your skills, technical and soft skills
  - the detail of your employment history, with focus on key responsibilities and achievements

Disadvantages
- A combination resume is often viewed as too long

This format is good for people
- Useful for those with a diverse range of skills and experiences
- Good for career changers with skills/experience that across multiple industries
- Applying for both creative and traditional roles
- With some employment gaps

INFO GRAPHIC RESUME

Infographic resumes use layout, colour, design, formatting, icons, and font styling to organise your experience.

Advantages
- Grabs attention of the reader
- Less text
- Great for those with seeking design/graphic jobs

Disadvantages
- Achieved higher popularity initially- not as popular now
- Most infographic resume cannot be read by Applicant Tracking Systems (ATS) cannot rendering themvirtually useless for screening purposes

PROFILE RESUME

- ▶ Includes a summary of skills, experiences, and goals related to a specific job
- ▶ The summary is a couple of sentences with a "sales pitch"
- ▶ Helpful for most job applicants

Useful for

- ▶ To sum up your extensive experience to hiring manager quickly
- ▶ Can highlight relevant skills for position If you have limited work experience

TAILORED RESUME

- ▶ Is customised to specifically highlight the experience and skills related to the job
- ▶ Naturally, it takes time and effort to write a tailored resume
- ▶ More and more popular with the increase in short attention spans and easy online job applications to which dozens of applicants can simply click "apply" for every job

You can imagine why submitting a tailored resume is well worth the effort!

- ▶ It helps you eliminate information that "kind of" doesn't apply to the job you want
- ▶ It also helps you get honest with yourself about the job you should be applying for
- ▶ Also gives you practice for interview by highlighting job-related skills & experience

Resume writing principles

Use this list below to prepare your resume:

Presentation

- ▶ Leave an overall positive impression, delete negative words or phrases
- ▶ Use 10–12 size font (Arial or Calibri are standard)
- ▶ Make the headings stand out (e.g. two sizes larger than normal text and bold)
- ▶ Use more white space between sections of information to improve navigation
- ▶ Allow for an adequate left-hand margin (e.g. 3 cm)
- ▶ Format the document so that sections of information are not split across two pages
- ▶ Customise your resume, don't rely on templates!

Format

- ▶ Don't use gimmicks (e.g. fancy borders, coloured paper, over the top graphics)
- ▶ Use consistent formatting throughout – font, size, justification, heading position
- ▶ Use sub-headings effectively and make relevant points easy to find
- ▶ Limit use of highlighting techniques – avoid uppercase, underlining, bolding, italics and multiple fonts
- ▶ Use bullet points or tables to categorise and list technical or IT experience
- ▶ Include page numbers in the footer (e.g. page 1 of 3)

Sequence

- ▶ Enter most recent and relevant information first, then work backwards chronologically
- ▶ Order the headings and lists so the most important information comes first
- ▶ Address the position requirements closely – use evidence and examples
- ▶ Ensure all dates are correct (use months and years only) and explain any gaps

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Length

▶ Ideal length for professional resumes is 3–4 pages
▶ Some employers will specify the length they prefer

Language

▶ Use a combination of brief text and bullet points – no wordy paragraphs
▶ Use formal business language – should be clear, concise and relevant
▶ Ensure correct grammar and punctuation
▶ Ensure correct spelling – English (Australian or UK not US)
▶ Avoid jargon and unexplained abbreviations
▶ Delete unnecessary words or punctuation
▶ Begin bullet points with active verbs (e.g. manage, report, develop, coordinate)
▶ Use consistent tense throughout (current tense for current job, past tense for previous jobs)
▶ Avoid repetition of information – draw on broader range of examples

Individualised

▶ Aim to stand out favourably from the crowd by providing relevant, factual and current information about your education, skills and experience
▶ Use relevant keywords that will appropriately keyword-sort your resume

Detail

▶ Include detail and information to support your claim to the position
▶ Ensure your meaning is clear, don't expect the reader to interpret
▶ Explain gaps in dates