

Candidate Chronicles - Resume Preparation Do's and Don'ts

Do include company description. Don't assume that people reading your resume know what your company does. If you work for a relatively unknown company, include its business, revenues and size.

Don't try to squeeze your resume on one page. It may have been drilled into your head never to submit a resume longer than a page, but if you are several years into your career, you should have more than enough information to spill over to a second page. The acceptable length for a resume is two pages. It is better to utilize a second page than reduce the font so it is difficult to read.

Do consider a bulleted style to make your resume as reader-friendly as possible.

Don't lie or fudge dates, titles or education on your resume. If a prospective employer conducts a background check and discovers that you have misrepresented yourself, you won't be receiving the job offer.

Do keep both a plain online text version of your resume and separate hard copy resume formatted with bullets and italics.

Don't use Objective in the heading of your resume. Employers aren't sold by your desire to, "Find a challenging position with growth opportunity." They will be sold on your history of past accomplishments and demonstrated contribution.

Don't make promotions within the same company look like job changes.

Do list your jobs in reverse chronological order.

Do quantify whenever possible. Use numbers to tell prospective employers how many people you supervised, by what percentage you increased sales, how many products you represented, etc.

Don't include on your resume your height, weight, age, date of birth, place of birth, marital status, sex, ethnicity/race, religion, health, social security number, names of former supervisors, specific street addresses or phone numbers of former employers, picture of yourself, salary information, the title "Resume," or any information that could be perceived as controversial, such as political affiliations.

Do think in terms of accomplishments when preparing your resume. Accomplishments are so much more meaningful to prospective employers than run-of-the-mill litanies of job responsibilities.

Don't include hobbies or other irrelevant personal information on a resume. In most cases, they are seen as fluff or filler.

Do remember that education also follows the principle about presenting information in the order of importance to the reader; thus the preferred order for listing your education is: Name of degree (spelled out: Bachelor of _____), name of major, name of college or university and year of graduation.

Don't list references on your resume. References belong in a later stage of the job search. Keep references on a separate sheet and provide them only when they are specifically requested.

Don't include "References available upon request." It is a given that you will provide references upon request.

Do include as much contact information as possible; for example, how to reach you during business hours.

Don't include the reasons you are no longer working at your past employers. "Laid off," "Company sold," "Left to make more money," etc. have no place on your resume.



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Do target your audience. Sending your resume to every ad in the paper or online has little chance of resulting in a job offer. Only forward your resume to those jobs for which you are qualified.

Don't include letters of recommendation, transcripts or awards. When you send out your resume, include only your resume. When you go in for an interview, you can bring in those letters and present them if asked.

Do give your resume as sharp a focus as possible. Since employers screen resumes in a few seconds, you need a way to show the employer at a glance what you want to do and what you're good at.

Don't use justified text blocks; they put odd little spaces between words. Instead, make your type flush left.

Do keep several versions of your resume targeted towards different positions. For example, if you have a sales and marketing background, you may have one resume focused on sales, one on marketing and a third on sales and marketing.

Don't use a functional format for your resume to hide employment gaps.

Do include key words in your resume defining your tangible skills.

Don't use personal pronouns (I, my, me) in a resume.

Do proofread carefully. Misspellings and typos are deadly on a resume.