

PURPOSE OF A RESUME

Understanding the purpose of a resume is the key to creating a successful one. Within the interview process, the primary purpose of your resume is to ***win you a phone screening***. If your phone isn't ringing, your resume isn't working. However, the good news is your resume is a fluid document; you can keep changing it until it does work.

The following tips are meant to help you prepare a dynamic resume. We apply these same techniques when we edit resumes for our candidates. As you write your own, try to be objective. Think of your resume as a self-marketing tool. Keep track of the resumes you send out and the phone calls you get in response. If the rate of return increases, your resume is improving.

CONTENT

Information on your resume should be clear and concise. It's a snapshot, not a novel. Say enough to get your point across and leave it at that. Employers are likely to skip over your resume if they have to wade through pages of information. Remember, you can always offer clarification and elaborate on the details in your interview.

- Avoid fluff - the first items we cut from resumes usually include "Objectives" and "Hobbies."
 - If you're applying for a position, your "Objective" should be getting that job
- Make sure company names, dates of employment and position titles are included and easy to find.
 - If you've worked out of state, it's also helpful to list the city and state in which the company was located.
- Include your achievements and contributions, usually 2-3 bullet points per position.
- Quantify your experience and successes. Did you manage two employees or 10?
- Include the scope of duties for each position without being overly detailed. Never use "Responsible for."
- If your resume is too long (more than two pages)
 - Exclude any work experience outside the last 10 years
 - Shape your resume like an upside down pyramid, include more information about your most recent experiences

FORMATTING

Think of formatting as the "body language" of your resume. You can say a lot about your computer and organizational skills by preparing a good layout. For most business professionals, we don't recommend using fancy fonts and graphics. If it's neat and clean and you'll already be ahead of the pack.

- Organize information into sections. (Qualifications, Professional Experience, Education & Training, Computer Skills)
- White space is important. It makes your resume more appealing to the eye and helps the important information pop. For this reason, keep margins between 0.5 and 1.0 inches. This also allows employers to take notes during your interview.
- Start your bullet points with verbs. Be consistent, not repetitive. For example: Prepared financial reports for 30 clients
- Bullet points do not need to be full sentences (no punctuation) and they should be no longer than two lines, preferably one.
- If you've held more than one position within a company, list the total length of time you've worked in a prominent spot. Then list the length of time you held each position next to its title.
- Always have someone else edit your resume. Use an extra set of eyes to check for content, spelling and formatting errors.