

Three Steps to Writing Your Own Resume

While most professionals hire a professional resume writer, some draft their own resume. People who write a lot for business usually have more success in putting together a sharp, focused presentation; still, anyone can learn the basic steps to prepare his or her own resume.

There are three major differences between a "strong" resume and an "o.k." resume:

1. **FORMAT AND PRESENTATION DETERMINE WHETHER THE RESUME IS READ**

The average resume is scanned, not read, for only 8-15 seconds. It either creates a strong impression to the reader immediately or it is set aside. It is similar to the impression you make on the interviewer. Therefore, make sure your resume is wearing the equivalent of a "business suit" and not jeans and flip-flops!

Choose a format that complements your career goal. If you are seeking a job in your field and have experience, use a chronological resume. This resume starts with your most recent job and works backward. Conversely, if you are seeking a new type of work, you may want to consider the functional/combination resume. This style groups your skills together and includes a short chronological work history at the end.

Other ways to ensure that your presentation gets noticed include:

- No errors: use spell check and also have someone review your resume for missing or misused words
- Use a consistent format and use of capitalization and punctuation throughout
- Provide lots of white space to accent strong parts of the resume
- Use no more than 2 fonts
- Include your name and address, a phone and email address
- Laser print your work on quality white or cream resume paper

2. **ACCOMPLISHMENTS TELL WHAT YOU'VE DONE; RESPONSIBILITIES STATE WHAT YOU WERE SUPPOSED TO HAVE DONE**

Not all accomplishments have to be big, but they have to show that you got results as you carried out your responsibilities. Often, they are something you are proud of or, they can simply quantify what you have done on a daily basis. Many of your routine activities can be quantified and written as accomplishments that demonstrate your experience and knowledge, and proof of how you've HELPED the company!

3. AVOID COMMON ERRORS IN RESUME WRITING

Many job seekers either don't know or don't understand the many items that do not belong in a resume. They include the following:

- Do not use "I", "me" or "my" statements; use the telegraphic method and drop the pronoun to make it more active. Instead of "I wrote the 40-page employee manual", say "Wrote 40-page employee manual"
- Avoid the use of the words "responsible for" and "duties included"
- Do not include personal information, such as age, health, ethnicity, marriage and family status. Employers will throw your resume out if it has such information because they could someday be accused of hiring bias
- Do not include photographs unless you are a model or actor
- Do not explain your reasons for leaving your previous jobs or employment gaps
- Don't send extra papers such as letters of recommendation, certificates or samples of your work. They clutter your presentation and are too premature. Use in the interview if appropriate
- Never include salary information
- Do not forward a list of references

Aleem Kamal,
Arza Employment Serv Ltd
Vancouver, Bc