

CANDIDATE TIPS

TIPS FOR WRITING GREAT RESUMES

Writing a resume can be a daunting prospect. This is a document that a potential employer uses to make their first judgement about you – so you'll want to ensure these judgements are positive.



Contact details - Obviously you need to include such basic information as your name, address, telephone numbers and email address. Make sure the e-mail address you use appears professional.

Professional summary - Ensure the first area at the top of your resume is a "summary of experience" and includes specific applicable experience as opposed to generalities.

Consider using words from the job description or posting so that applicant tracking systems (ATS) can recognise them and make a match.



Education and qualifications - Reference your career objective back to the job applied for to give an indication of what you are looking for in your next career move, with an overview of your key achievements.

Work experience - This should be listed in chronological order, beginning with the most recent. Include employer names, positions held and primary responsibilities. Use language like "managed" or "oversaw" as recruiters and hiring managers react better to this terminology.

Try to include an indication of salary level achieved and reasons for leaving each position.

We advise you not to leave gaps in your CV. If you took a year out, carried out an interim assignment, or travelled for six months, say so.

Stating the years, rather than the months you started or finished a role can also send off alarm bells. Writing "2008 - 2009" could be interpreted as employment from December 2008 to January 2009 unless you say otherwise.

References - It is also important to include details of two references, such as former employers. If you are a graduate with no work history, include details of a former lecturer.

Online recommendations are great for showing the skills you are best known for but they are not a substitute for the role references play.

The referees recruiters and employers value the most are those people you reported to directly. Former managers can also speak to your personal attributes such as reliability, ability to build and leverage relationships and whether you collaborate well with other team members.



Document format - Most companies will upload your resume into their databases so make sure it is written in a common format. Most applicant tracking systems (ATS) accept a variety of document formats, including PDF, DOC, TXT, ODF and HTM.

We suggest using a clean format with no graphics, images or tables. ATS software doesn't pick up images and graphics as they aren't searchable inside the database. It is best not to use any special characters or fonts. Avoid headers and footers, too, as these can be incompatible with most ATS.

We recommend not placing too much information on one page or using graphics and flowery or small fonts that are difficult to read as they distract from the content.

If you have your own website profiling your work, include the URL, but do not simply submit the URL address instead of a resume.

Final checks - Don't forget to spell check your CV. Remember, it is the first impression your potential employer will have of you, so take the time to get it right. If possible, ask someone to proof read your resume to check for any spelling, layout or typing errors.

Finally, attach your resume to an email, rather than pasting the text into your email program.

Unless otherwise stated, you do not need to attach copies of certificates relating to educational and/or professional qualifications (including recent academic transcripts) or references from previous employers. You should instead bring these to a job interview.



Make personal contact - The best way to make sure your resume is seen is by following up with a phone call.