

Writing an Effective Resume

Your resume will be used to sell your skills and background to prospective employers. It therefore needs to be clear and unambiguous, outlining your work history and IT experience, along with other relevant information.

Constructing a great resume requires careful planning and preparation. It is not something that can be created in a short time - remember that this is an investment for your future so dedicating time and energy upfront will pay dividends later! There is much advice available on submitting an effective resume, some of which is outlined below, but although these are basic guidelines to adhere to, you should also allow your individuality to shine through!

- Do not write a novel. We suggest you keep it to three to five pages. It should concisely paint a picture of you and your job history. Key points should be highlighted to develop interest and excitement about you as a potential candidate. Include the kind of information you would like to know if you were hiring someone. The reviewer must be drawn to wanting to meet you in person.
- Put your work history and educational details in reverse chronological order, that is, starting with the most recent. It's easier to follow.
- Don't use a narrative style. Highlight your accomplishments in a bullet point format, then you don't need as many complete sentences—that's how you get it into three to five pages! But be warned: brief points must be carefully thought out. At the interview stage, your statements must be backed up by evidence—based on your track record or education.
- Write in clear, concise terms, using active words (eg. accomplished, created, enhanced, launched, negotiated, etc) and keeping pronouns (I, we, they) to a minimum or avoid them altogether. If you don't feel comfortable with this, write a bold statement such as: 'Achieved sales objectives of 250 units per month'.
- Layout and design should be legible, consistent and easy to follow, with good clear headings, large easy-to-read type face—such as Arial or Times Roman or Courier—and no typographical or grammatical errors. Use good quality, plain paper. (Coloured paper or a fancy border doesn't add anything unless the position in question requires a demonstration of that sort of creativity).
- Avoid initials and jargon. Write in plain English so you're understood. There's a general consensus by good interviewers that people who really know their subject, write and speak clearly and don't try to complicate issues.

- Keep it succinct. Highlight particular personal achievements. For example: 'During my period as Manager, turnover increased 120 per cent'. If your professional experience is limited, it might be wise to include memberships of clubs or organisations that show commitment to being involved.
- Keep it honest. Don't exaggerate your experience to make it sound more impressive. If it can't stand up to scrutiny in the interview, you will blow your chances of getting the job.
- Be specific in your CV. Use numbers or percentages to illustrate your successes or the impact you can have. Avoid claiming complete responsibility for achievements, implying no-one else deserves any credit, which is usually not the case.
- Orientate your CV towards specific (and quantifiable) achievements rather than duties and responsibilities. It should tell prospective employers everything that might interest them and nothing that will waste their time.
- Leave out all details of past salaries, bonus payments, superannuation contributions. This will be covered in the interview stages. Without knowing all the details of the company and the job, you might inadvertently send a message that you are too cheap or too expensive.
- People who receive CVs often use them for screening you 'out' rather than 'in'. Be aware that the first person to look at your CV for a specific job is not likely to be the person who will do the interviewing; the person screening out inappropriate CVs may only have a list of criteria to match. Your CV will have to get beyond this point to ensure you are considered for an interview.
- When you get to the interview, your CV can act as the agenda for your discussion, giving the interviewer a springboard from which to launch the inquiry. Yes, it is acceptable to keep it in front of you but only refer to it as, and when, you need to.
- Do not send poor quality photocopies. It doesn't cost much for good quality reproductions—and this is your career we're talking about!

***'Remember, your Resume is
your personal brochure, a 60 second
commercial if you will...
Use it to convince others of your ability
to meet the needs of the position.'***

- Anon