

Resume Do's and Don'ts

DO

1. Do include ways to contact you - Website address/URL (if available), city and state only (no street address), a single phone number (no second/third number, no fax number), and a single email address. While job-seekers were once advised to include as much contact information as possible, the emerging trend is for minimal contact information, in part because of identity theft.
2. Do give your resume as sharp a focus as possible. Given that employers screen resumes for as few as 6 seconds, you need a way to show the employer at a glance what you want to do and what you're good at.
3. Do consider a section such as Summary of Qualifications, or Profile, which can also help sharpen your focus.
4. 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.
5. Do, list sports if you're a college student or new grad. Many employers specifically seek out athletes because of their drive and competitiveness, as well as teamwork and leadership skills.
6. Do realize that the phrase References available upon request is highly optional because it is a given that you will provide references upon request. If you couldn't, you would have no business looking for a job. The line can serve the purpose of signaling: This is the end of my resume, but if you are trying to conserve space, leave it off.
7. Do Optimize for Applicant Tracking Systems. Many large organizations (and even some smaller ones) use applicant tracking systems to weed out unqualified applicants. The systems scan your resume for contextual keywords and phrases, mathematically scoring them for relevance and sending only the most qualified ones through for human review. As you can guess, this strategy isn't perfect. To ensure your resume makes it past the ATS and into the hands of a human, keep your formatting simple, include the right keywords (but don't go overboard), and quadruple check for spelling mistakes.
8. When deciding whether to leave something on your resume, use the New York Times test. In other words, if you wouldn't want it published next to your name on the front page of a major national newspaper, take it out.
9. Make it an easy read – have plenty of white space in your margin. If the resume looks like it is crammed onto one page, spread it out over 2 pages.

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DON'T

1. Don't ever lie on your resume.
2. Don't leave out the locations of your past jobs (city and state). This information is expected, but many job-seekers unwittingly omit it.
3. Don't mix noun and verb phrases when describing your jobs.
4. Don't have grammar or spelling errors on your resume.
5. Don't use expressions like: Duties included, Responsibilities included, or Responsible for. That's job-description language, not accomplishments-oriented resume language that sells.
6. Don't emphasize older experience on your resume. Include your jobs that are more than 15 years old, but list them in bare-bones fashion (title, employer, location) with or without dates of employment. You may want to title this section Previous Professional Experience.
7. Don't list high school (unless you're still a teenager)!
8. Don't include on your resume your height, weight, age, date of birth, place of birth, marital status, sex, ethnicity/race, health, social security number (except on an international resume), reasons for leaving previous job(s), 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 religion, church affiliations, or political affiliations.
9. Don't include hobbies or other irrelevant information on a resume. In most cases, they are seen as superfluous and trivial. An argument can be made that hobbies are interview conversation starters or that they make you seem well-rounded, but they are generally seen as fluff or filler.
10. Don't list references right 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.