Resume Writing Tips: The 5 C's

Five essential attributes of an effective resume.

www.vertex42.com/resumes/resume-tips.html

Writing a resume can be daunting task, but if you remember to apply the 5 C's of Resume Writing, your resume will stand a much better chance of landing you an interview. The following resume tips are general guidelines that apply to nearly all resumes, but there may be exceptions. You should be aware of and follow the practices used in your specific industry.

#1: Be Convincing

- Write your resume as an advertisement for yourself.
- Focus on the employer's needs, not your own.
- Start descriptions using action verbs, especially those related to the position you are seeking.
- Include numbers, percentages, time saved, and dollar values to describe your accomplishments.
- Include key words - study various job postings to determine important keywords.
- List the most important information and selling points first. When listing employment in chronological order, you can still list accomplishments underneath each job in order of importance.
- Use a resume style (chronological, functional, or combined) appropriate for your set of qualifications and industry.

#2: Be Concise

- Keep your resume to a single page if possible.
- Use 2 pages only if you have extensive work experience or an advance degree. Put your name at the top of the second page.
- Use short sentences - complete sentences may not be necessary.
- You can use incomplete or fragmented sentences (especially in bulleted lists) if they are clear and the style is consistent.
- Use bulleted lists instead of paragraphs when appropriate.

- Include the note "References Available Upon Request" only if you need to fill space.
- Avoid using phrases like "Responsible for", "Responsibilities included", or "" that may dilute your content.

#3: Be Clear

- Consider using Objective and Summary of Qualifications sections instead of an ambiguously labeled "Profile" section.
- Make your resume skimmable. People do not "read" resumes - they skim them.
- Use white space effectively. If information is too crowded, it is difficult to scan. Too much white space can be annoying.
- Include dates and locations of employment and education.
- Include your GPA if you are a student or recently graduated.
- Include your citizenship if applying for a government position.
- Define abbreviations and acronyms if they are not widely known in your industry.

#4: Be Consistent

- Be consistent in your grammatical style, particularly when using bulleted lists. For example, if you start a phrase with a verb, don't start the next bullet with a noun.
- Avoid writing in first person (don't use I, my, etc). Using action verbs makes it unnecessary to use first person (e.g. "Analyzed ..." instead of "I analyzed...").
- Use the same format style for listing your job, position, and dates of employment throughout your resume.

#5: Be Clean

- Have someone review your resume for proper grammar, spelling, and punctuation.

- Use a safe font like Arial or Times New Roman. Times New Roman is often used in academic or conservative fields.

- Avoid using phrases that may dilute your content like "Responsible for" or "Responsibilities included."

- Print on 8 1/2" x 11" high quality resume paper using a laser printer.

- Avoid flashy fonts, colors, and graphics. Don't go overboard with bold text or capitals.

- Design your resume to be scannable by OCR software.

Tips for Reviewing Your Resume

- Print your resume and evaluate it:
  - What is the first thing you see when you look at your resume?
  - Does critical information stand out?
  - Does your resume sell yourself within 10-15 seconds?

- When you read your resume, put yourself in the hiring manager's shoes.

- Ask a faculty member, advisor to review your resume.

- Ask a counselor, faculty member, or someone unfamiliar with your background to provide feedback on their impressions.

- Make sure that your resume and cover letter are tailored to the specific qualifications included in the job posting.

- Do a final check for spelling, grammar, and punctuation.

Resume Writing Don'ts

- Don't use pictures. That causes people to pre-judge you even if they are not supposed to.

- Don't be redundant. (Exception: Your summary of qualifications might contain some information that is also included elsewhere in your resume.

- Don't fold or staple your resume.

- Don't use negative words.

- Don't include salary info.

- Don't mention your religion, marital status, age, political views, or race.

- Don't use gimmicks or try to be funny.

- Don't include hobbies or interests unless they are related to your qualifications or reflect strong character or work ethic.

- Don't include any negative traits or characteristics.

- Don't use contractions.

- Don't use jargon or slang.

Resume Resources

How to Write a Resume
www.vertex42.com/resumes/how-to-write-a-resume.html

This article explains how to structure your resume and provides a detailed description of each of the major sections.

Resume Template
www.vertex42.com/resumes/free-resume-template.html

Download a free resume template for Microsoft Word®.

Action Verbs
www.vertex42.com/resumes/action-verbs.html

A fairly comprehensive list of resume action verbs categorized by skill type.

Sample Resumes
www.vertex42.com/resumes/

Find more information, sample resumes, and resume templates for specific careers.