

Ajilon Professional Staffing



Resume writing tips

Effective advice for
creating a winning resume.

It's your
calling card,
make it
memorable.



Searching for a job can be a complicated process. And, while networking and interviewing are both crucial elements in the search, your resume is often the first thing a potential employer sees of you. It becomes your calling card.

Much more than a summary of your professional experience, a solid resume is a tool with which you market yourself — it can be the difference between landing an interview and landing in the “no” pile.

Ajilon Professional Staffing has screened millions of resumes. We know what makes one stand out over another. **And, while there’s no formula for creating a resume guaranteed to deliver your dream job, there are specific things you can do to make your resume stand out from the rest.**

Resume writing tips

Presentation is half the battle.

First off, you need to decide on a format and length for your resume. With all of the information you need to include, arranging it in an intelligent, reader-friendly manner is important. It is also vital that you proofread carefully — resumes with spelling errors are often the first to be discarded. Recruiters and employers sift through hundreds of resumes at a time. Making yours catch their eye — for all the right reasons — is crucial.

Chronological vs. functional.

The two main resume styles are chronological and functional. While each has its own set of benefits, ultimately the format you choose should be based on your work experience and the job you're seeking.

- **By date.**

Chronological resumes are perfect for anyone with a lot of experience in one field who is searching for a job in that same field. This type of resume will include an objective or summary statement about the job you are seeking, and a list of your employment history in chronological order, starting with the most recent position.

- **By key points.**

A functional resume focuses on your abilities in a way that is perfect for people new to the workforce — such as recent college graduates — and anyone changing careers.



The length of your resume should be based on your experience and the type of job you're seeking.

Resume writing tips

By directing a prospective employer's attention to your relevant skills, you place the emphasis on your potential, rather than your experience. In this way, functional resumes are a great option for anyone who has gaps in their work history or whose experience isn't necessarily a perfect fit for the position.

How long is too long?

When it comes to how long or short your resume should be, there's no definite answer. The length of your resume should be based on your experience and the type of job you're seeking. Here are some basic guidelines you should follow to ensure that your resume is an appropriate length.

- **Sometimes, less is more.**

Typically, anyone new to the job market or transitioning between career fields should stick to a one-page resume.

- **Other times, a little extra is OK.**

Those with at least ten years of experience related to the job they are seeking, or anyone whose field requires technical or engineering skills, should opt for a two-page resume. This will allow enough space to include all of the pertinent information in a readable manner.

- **Write away.**

Executives or senior-level managers with a long list of accomplishments in their field — or those in an academic or scientific field whose experience includes a number of publications, licenses or patents — are the only people who should be circulating a resume that is three pages or longer. When a multiple-page resume is appropriate, an addendum can be used after page two. This allows job seekers the option of including the full document depending on the requirements of the job.

Regardless of the style and length of your resume, there are a few things to keep in mind:

- **Keep it concise.**

Remember, your resume is not meant to be an autobiography; its goal is to market you to the specific job you want, so include only the information that is key to the position you are applying for.

- **Simplicity is best.**

Style and length mean little if your resume is difficult to read, so keep the format clean and professional. Employers typically spend 15 seconds or less scanning resumes, so use bullet points and a bold font to get their attention and highlight key skills and job titles. Avoid italics, as they are often more difficult to read.



- **Don't bury the "lead."**

With hundreds of resumes to go through, hiring managers spend a limited amount of time skimming each one. You need to get your message across right away and convince them your skills and experience are what they're seeking. Make sure that key information is either listed first or presented in a manner that makes it stand out.

- **Be honest.**

When it comes to resumes potential employers are on the lookout for exaggerated skills or results. Grossly overstating your accomplishments can send up a red flag that may come back to haunt you during an interview — or eliminate your chances of securing an interview in the first place. So, be honest; even if your embellishments make it past a recruiter or potential employer, you're setting yourself up for failure by misrepresenting yourself and your abilities.

What's your objective?

The type of job you're looking for and the amount of experience you possess should determine if an objective is necessary. For instance, those with a long list of accomplishments in their chosen field may prefer to include a description of their career goal in a qualifications summary, while others may find that their relevant work experience will make their career goal obvious.

Resume writing tips

However, for people just entering the workforce or changing career fields, work experience may not make their ultimate career goal clear. An objective provides a great opportunity to spotlight the position you are interested in. Stick to these rules when writing an objective:

- **Play up your potential value.**

Be sure to emphasize the value you would bring to the company; not the reason you want the job. Potential employers are looking for someone who will enhance the organization, not their own resume.

- **Clarity is critical.**

Avoid statements that make vague references regarding your career goal. Instead, be specific about what you're looking for. If you have more than one career goal, be sure to create a different objective for each position.

- **Stay on target.**

Let's face it; you're working with a limited amount of space as it is, so don't waste any by writing out a long objective. Include a job title or target, and then keep it short and simple. Get to the point and don't stray.

- **Work your words.**

Above all else, your objective should be written with the goal of the hiring manager in mind. So, choose words and phrases that will convey the message that your strengths and goals are a match. For example, use active words like

Resume writing tips



Showing that you've made good use of your time at another job helps employers visualize what you can do for them.

“develop” and “contribute,” or include terms from the job advertisement to ensure that you are on target with the needs of the hiring manager.

Content is key.

While formatting is an important element of writing a resume designed to land you an interview, no amount of dressing it up will make a weak resume strong. So before you sit down to create your resume, list your skills and accomplishments, and be sure to include any pertinent details with each element.

- **Skip the job description.**

There’s no need to rewrite the job description for each previous position you’ve held. Listing all of your duties isn’t nearly as important as conveying the details of your performance in that position.

- **Don’t forget to add your contact information.**

This is usually placed at the top of your resume and should include your mailing address, telephone number and e-mail address. Your current work telephone number and e-mail address are not appropriate.

- **Quantify your results.**

Wherever possible, include dollar amounts. If you managed a sizeable budget or inked a big deal, be sure to mention this — employers want to see what you’ve done and numbers are a great way to show them.

Resume writing tips

- **Know the numbers.**

Likewise, if the amount of people you managed or programs you've developed was significant, focus on that information. Showing that you've made good use of your time at another job helps employers visualize what you can do for them.

- **Mention "off-the-job" experience.**

Be sure to highlight any skills, education, community/volunteer work and additional schooling that pertains to your particular job area or that a potential employer might view as an asset. Include any notable professional awards, recognitions or accomplishments you have earned.

- **Professionalism is key.**

Including photographs, hobbies unrelated to the job, or personal information is unnecessary.

Watch your words.

Use language to your advantage by knowing which words to include in your resume.

- **Power words.**

It is important to include any words that convey your ability to work with others, be proactive and get the job done in a timely and precise

manner regardless of circumstances. So be sure to use words like “teamwork,” “flexibility,” “detail-oriented” and “self-motivated” — they represent key skills employers are looking for.

- **Weak words.**

Any words that take away from you being able to showcase your talents and skills should be avoided. Abbreviations and acronyms may confuse a potential employer who is unfamiliar with the terms. Personal pronouns are also unnecessary — don’t waste space on the words “I,” “me” or “my.”

- **Nix the negative.**

Avoid making negative comments on past experiences. If there’s a difficult issue you must address, such as being dismissed from a previous job, save it for the interview. Negative words will catch a potential employer’s eye and might keep you from reaching the next stage.

- **Back to basics.**

Most importantly, make sure your resume is well-written. Spelling and grammatical errors are unacceptable — they are red flags that alert potential employers to the possibility that you aren’t as detail-oriented as you claim. A solid, professional resume shows employers you are capable of creating top-notch work for them.



You only get one chance
to make a first impression;
make it count.

Resume writing tips

You only get one chance to make a first impression; make it count.

The purpose of a great resume is to entice a prospective employer into calling you in for an interview. The purpose of a great cover letter is to persuade that employer into reading your resume.

- **Know your audience.**

Always keep in mind who you are addressing when writing your cover letter. Customize it so it is specific to the position and company.

- **Keep it simple.**

Your cover letter should not be longer than one page and should convey your interest in the job and highlight your main qualifications. Bullet point a couple of key facts you'd like to highlight from your resume.

- **Open big.**

Be sure to have a strong opening. You only have a sentence or two to catch the reader's attention, so make good use of your opening lines.

- **Take control.**

Let the employer know you will follow up with them in a set amount of time. Include your contact information in case they'd like to get in touch with you sooner.

- **It's not personal; it's business.**

Always follow proper business etiquette. Adhere to standard letter format, use proper grammar, check your spelling and make sure you sign the letter.

**Have the last word;
don't lose a lead over loose ends.**

Once you've sent your resume out, it's tempting to sit back and wait for a response, but following up is an important part of the job search.

- **Wait a week.**

Many recruiters agree that waiting a minimum of one week before following up on a resume is the best idea. This way, it has most likely arrived in the hands of the right person.

- **Try e-mail.**

A short e-mail message is a great way to follow up.

- Include your full name and the title of the position you've applied for in the subject line.
- Write a professional note that briefly restates your interest in the job and your qualifications.
- Attach your resume again.
- Proofread the e-mail carefully.

Resume writing tips

- **Give them a call.**

If you are using a recruiter and decide to follow up over the phone, the most important thing to do is rehearse! The last thing you need to do is come across as unprofessional, so plan out what you'll say — maybe even write it down — before you call.

- Always contact your recruiter, not the hiring manager. Most hiring managers do not want people calling them directly — that's one reason they sought the services of a recruiter.
- Once you're on the phone, introduce yourself with the same name as on your resume — no nicknames; mention that you submitted a resume recently and the position you are interested in. Ask if they've received your resume and if they're still considering candidates for the position.
- If you get voicemail, try again. It's always better to speak with a live person than a recording.
- Remember, there's no need to call constantly. Keep the calls short, sweet and to a minimum.

To learn more about how Ajilon Professional Staffing can help you achieve your career goals, please contact your local representative at 866.GO AJILON or visit ajilonusa.com.



Proper follow up
is a crucial part
of the job search.

Ajilon Professional Staffing

Ajilon Professional Staffing is a leader in recruiting and project consulting, with specialty divisions in finance, office and legal. In North America, more than 200 offices service a range of clients through an integrated suite of human capital solutions.

- **Ajilon Finance** specializes in the temporary and direct-hire placement of premier accounting, financial and bookkeeping professionals.
ajilonfinance.com
- **Ajilon Office** offers clients specialized administrative and management professionals on a temporary and direct-hire basis.
ajilonoffice.com
- **Ajilon Legal** places highly-qualified candidates in a wide range of specialized positions including attorneys, paralegals and legal support professionals.
ajilonlegal.com
- **Ajilon Finance Solutions** provides senior-level financial and operations professionals to companies on a project or interim basis.
ajilonfs.com



100%

From well-managed forests

Cert no. SW-COC-001434
www.fsc.org

© 1996 Forest Stewardship Council

866.GO AJILON
ajilonusa.com

©2008 Ajilon #8008