

Resume Tips...

Your resume: Make it work as hard — and as smart — as you do!

Resume wears many 'hats'

It is important to remember that a resume actually combines a variety of purposes and functions. Even though every resume is a listing of employers and responsibilities, it also can take on other roles for you.

Sales tool. It is a sales tool, designed to showcase you at your very best. The person who reviews your resume may be a buyer, so it is essential to feature all of your most attractive skills.

Factual document. In addition, your resume is a factual document that contains key truths about you and your performance. National surveys show that a horrifyingly high percentage of people — one in five — are not careful with the truth in their resume. Their errors may range from covering up a one-month unemployment "gap" to manufacturing a college degree or work experience. On behalf of a client, we do check on all the facts contained in a resume. How do you think we react if we discover a lie or serious evasion?

Be honest in what you say about yourself. Don't inflate a title or patch up an educational background even slightly. If you're caught (and you are quite likely to be), you will have damaged yourself irreparably in the eyes of recruiters and employers.

Personality guide. Then, too, a resume is a personality guide, giving the reader insight into you and your ways of thinking and acting. Every resume has its own style, pace and energy. It is not difficult to discern the solo performers and the team players, for example, just from a review of the resumes.

Writing sample. And, of course, your resume is also a writing sample, a representation of your ability to organize your thoughts and express them clearly. Are you terse? Are you wordy? Are you intent on providing carefully crafted sentences, or do you care more about making an impact through figures and tightly phrased descriptions? Your style is your own; just be sure there are no typos if you want to be taken seriously.

Making a resume work hard

You can accomplish much with a resume, if you take the time to think it through and select a format that is appropriate. In the same way that you want to work smarter, not just harder, you can make your resume an effective part of your job search arsenal. It is essential to consider whether you will prepare a *chronological* or a *skills-based* resume. Each has virtues, of course. Probably one or the other will "feel" right to you after you have explored both options thoroughly.

Chronological resume

The chronological resume takes you from your most recent/current position and moves back in time through your career. (Be sure it moves in the right direction. One resume began with the individual's job in junior high, only to end two pages later with his current major corporate healthcare position!) The chronological resume demonstrates career growth, an evident increase in responsibilities and titles that are strong indications of a career-oriented individual.

Skills-based resume

Since Witt/Kieffer develops a series of skill specifications with our clients for each search assignment, we are looking for certain experiences when we review resumes. The skills-based resume highlights a person's proven talents. It may be the most appropriate format for many individuals, especially for younger and more junior executives — those with more talent than experience, perhaps. Using this format requires a significant amount of effort, as you will need to analyze your performance and select your absolute "star" qualities for display. And remember, the skills you highlight must be in demand now and in the future.

Tips for resumes

Here are some tips to keep in mind when you prepare your own resume:

- Be sure it is word-processed and printed with the highest quality paper and typesetting you can afford. Your resume should give the same professional impression that you do, so avoid cute or trendy papers or inks.
- Have several individuals proofread your resume for both spelling and grammar. You would rather have a friend find a typo than a potential employer, wouldn't you?
- Omit names of references in your resume, but be prepared to provide them upon request. Be sure your references are individuals who know your work performance, not just that you are a fine person. And be sure to have their permission before you actually give out their names and phone numbers.
- Provide home and office phone numbers for yourself. Search consultants work at all hours, but most prefer to call potential candidates at work during the business day. Search consultants are skilled at calling confidentially.

No perfect resume

Just as the perfect person has not yet been found, there is no "perfect" resume. Your resume should intrigue and interest readers. Even if you are not in the job market now, and have no intention to be in the near future, take out your resume and give it a long, careful review. It's likely to be dated in some respect, and you can probably enhance it. Do the work now, when there's no pressure or deadlines. Then, when an exciting new job opportunity comes along, you'll be ready to let your resume work — smart and hard — for you.

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About Witt/Kieffer

Witt/Kieffer is the nation's leading executive search firm specializing in health care and higher education. The firm conducts executive searches on behalf of hospitals, health systems, universities and colleges, academic medical centers and medical schools, as well as associations, community service organizations and other not-for-profit institutions. Our mission is to identify outstanding leadership solutions for organizations committed to improving the quality of life. The firm's values are infused with a passion for excellence, personalized service, diversity and integrity. For more information, visit www.wittkieffer.com.

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