HOW TO WRITE A GREAT RESUME

Human beings are known to have short attention spans. In an Eye-Tracking study conducted by Ladders in 2018, recruiters scan a resume for an average of only 7.4 seconds. That's all the time you have got to make a solid impression. The study found that recruiters look at your current title and company, your previous employer and the timeframe of your jobs to figure out what sort of career progression you have made. Lastly, they review your education requirements. It only takes a few seconds for recruiters to decide if you're the right fit for the job. This means that your resume has to really stand out if you wish to capture the attention of the hiring manager. Therefore, it becomes crucial to pen down a resume that makes a good first impression. Generally, when you're looking for a new job, the first thing that you do is update your resume. But there's more to just adding your current employment details to the existing one. A resume is not just an account of your education, skills and experience. It is an advertisement for a product that you're trying to sell. What product are you selling, then? YOU. The objective of a resume has to be to get you the first interview call. Follow these tips below to make your resume grab the right kind of attention and get you that interview call you're hoping for!

1. Resume Format

There are three broad formats that are used to draft resumes.

- **Reverse chronological** - This is the most traditional format and the most widely accepted. Candidates should list their experiences and education from newest to oldest i.e. most recent job first. It works very well when you want to demonstrate a career progression.
- **Functional** – This resume format heavily focuses on the applicant's qualifications and is well-suited for anyone with an expert level of knowledge or experience in a specific domain. It works well if you wish to highlight a specific skill set or if you're looking to change industries.
- **Combination** – This, as the name suggests, is a mix of both the above formats. It allows the candidate to highlight their skills and present their work history. However, it is not suitable for freshers or candidates with less experience.

The reverse chronological format is the most common and versatile option that allows you to play around with the layout. It works for all kinds of resumes – be it technical, experienced or non-experienced.

2. Contact information should be up-to-date

You don't want to miss out on an interview just because you provided the wrong phone number or email address, do you? Make sure you double check the contact information you have provided on your resume. It's also important to provide a professional email address. A funky or childish sounding email address will land your resume in the trash and employers won't take you seriously.

3. Use the right font, font size and colors

Good readability is one of the keys of a standout resume, hence font size is very important. A font size of 10-12 is optimal for most people. It's best to stick to black for text but you may use bold colors to highlight specific skills or keywords that are relevant to the job. Do not use garish colors since those tend to give an unprofessional vibe. It's also best to stick to standard fonts like Arial or Verdana. These are safe bets as they're used in companies for professional communication. Avoid fonts like Comic Sans that are not widely accepted.

4. Write a subheading for each part of your resume

Give a simple heading to every sub-section of your resume so that a recruiter can easily find the relevant section. It also makes the resume appealing to the eyes and gives a neater look. It also helps any AI software to pick up on the relevant keywords.

5. Use a good template

There are a lot of professional resume templates available to download for free on sites like Indeed and Canva. Pick one that works for you and it will take care of the margins, the alignment, the spacing and everything else that you struggle with in Microsoft Word or Google Docs. Leave a good amount of margin on all sides so that if a manager decides to print, punch holes and file it, none of your information is lost.

6. Add any social media URLs that you may have

These days, a lot of hiring managers visit a prospective employee's social media accounts to know more about them. Feel free to add any relevant social media URLs to your resume like your Twitter username or LinkedIn profile information. If you're in the creative field, you can add your Instagram or Facebook account information as well. If you write a blog, it's good to mention that too. You may also want to check your own profiles to verify that you have not posted any objectionable content.

7. Add numbers and actual data wherever possible

Numbers tend to have a deeper effect than plain sentences because it gives a more realistic idea of your capabilities. So writing something like 'Made over $5000 in gross sales' will definitely get more attention than just writing 'Highest sales in a month'. No matter what your contribution was, try to quantify it and cite actual numbers.

8. Name your resume file properly

Use a professional file name like and avoid words like 'temp' or just 'resume_123' etc. It's better to use your full name along with the role you're applying for, like 'JohnSmith_SalesManager'. Hiring managers generally save these files on their computers and if you have named your file correctly, the chances of it not being overlooked improve significantly.

9. Avoid industry-specific jargon

The person who's reading your resume may or may not be aware of all the technical terminologies used in your industry, especially in the fields of engineering, law or medicine. It's best to stick to terms that can be understood by a layman, or at least try and simplify things for people.

10. Address significant career gaps

Make sure you mention and explain any large career gaps you may have had. It is always good to be honest about the reasons. The career gap does not always have to impact you negatively. If the hiring manager is convinced that it was unintentional and beneficial for you, this can easily be overlooked. You should also mention any new skills you picked up during your gap, any volunteering activities you may have participated in or a new degree that you earned.

11. Highlight your promotions

Make sure you mention all promotions you have received. Highlight each designation and list all responsibilities in the form of bullet points. You do not have to mention every single one of your duties since that will make your resume too long. 5-6 bullet points per section is ideal.

12. Write an appropriate cover letter

A good cover letter will make the hiring manager take interest in your resume and make it stand out. The cover letter needs to add value to your resume, match it and provide some details that your resume may not provide. You can highlight your achievements, show your enthusiasm in the company and employees, and how you can bring your skills to enhance their overall performance.

Save your resume in a pdf format, proofread it and email it to the hiring manager! Save a copy to your Google Drive so that you don't lose it if your computer gives up on you. An excellent, well written resume and cover letter is sure to put you among the top contenders for the job you're applying for. Good luck!

SOURCES:

https://zety.com/blog/resume-tips