



Resume 101

What is the goal of a resume?

- To get you an interview. Full stop. Once you land the interview, the resume serves as a jumping off point for discussion.

What is a resume?

- A brief, data-heavy, overview of your professional background including the companies you've worked at, the positions you've held, (timespans of both), and your key accomplishments within those roles.
- It's generally the first (and sometimes the only) thing a recruiter or hiring manager sees when you apply for a role, so you want to make it good.

What shouldn't be on a resume?

- You don't *need* to list absolutely every job you've ever had – if you're relatively early on in your career (roughly 0-3 years of professional experience), you might include jobs like your high school / college jobs (mostly to demonstrate work ethic). Past that, your professional experience takes precedence, especially when it comes to editing for space.
- You don't need to list every responsibility you've had in each role (i.e. your job descriptions). The scope of what you did may be important, but don't get bogged down there. For more technical roles (e.g. engineering, operations where deep experience working within a tech is important, you will want to include the tech/software you've worked with as recruiters will keyword search for those.)
- Self-descriptive language without quantitative qualifiers/awards. It's a waste of someone's attention span to read that you're a "hard worker" or a "team player" because those phrases are cliché.

How do recruiters and hiring managers review resumes?

- Initial screening: Recruiters review resumes *quickly*. The stat thrown around is that a recruiter spends 7 seconds reviewing a resume. In our experience that's reasonably accurate. We often get hundreds of applications per position. We can very quickly scan a resume to determine if there's a possible fit (and therefore worth a longer review of the resume/application) or not.
- Once you pass the initial screening, the biggest things we focus on (like it or not, fair or not) are current/recent/average tenure, gaps in employment, employers worked at, titles held,

and accomplishments. Depending on role you're applying for, your education, and experience working with various technologies may or may not matter. Engineers, accountants, and lawyers, for instance, need degrees and sometimes advanced degrees/certifications/continuing education credit. Experienced sales professionals, on the other hand, generally don't.

FAQs:

- **Q: Does it have to be 1 page?**
- A: No, especially as resumes are generally reviewed digitally these days. It is best to keep it brief, though. If you have less than 10, and definitely less than 5 years of professional experience, you should be able to keep it under 1 page. If you're having trouble deciding between 1 page and 2 because you want to keep in key information, err on the side of a longer resume.
- **Q: I'm worried about age discrimination, what can I do?**
- A: Age bias/discrimination happens unfortunately. It's not hard to estimate a candidate's age given a graduation date. Once you have enough professional experience under your belt, feel free to omit your graduation date, and potentially even some of your earlier roles if they're not particularly relevant to the roles you're applying to now.
- **Q: I heard advice that contradicts something you wrote here. Who do I listen to?**
- A: Unfortunately there are no definitive rules when it comes to best practices. What we've covered above is based on our experience successfully working with and placing candidates across different industries and sectors in the US.
- **Q: Are resume writing services worth it?**
- A: Probably not, in our opinion. If you can follow directions and guidelines like we've laid out above and and/or have a group of industry peers who will give you candid feedback on your resume, you probably don't need to pay for a service. That said, some people swear by the value they've gotten from them.
- **Q: Do you offer resume review/writing services?**
- A: As a value-add (read: free) service for candidates we're representing, yes. At this time we do not provide it as a paid service, though.
- **Q: This is silly but what should I name the file?**
- A: Not silly – paying attention to details is important. A convention like "Firstname Lastname – Resume" or "Firstname Lastname – Month Year – Resume" is good practice.

Caveats:

There are no real hard and fast rules here. This advice is based on our experience recruiting in the for-profit private sector (i.e. non-government, non-academia) in the US. Your industry and geography may have entirely different standards. For instance, it's not uncommon to include a headshot photo, marital status, and information about your passport in some regions of the world.