

# Best Practices for Resume Writing



## Should you use an objective or summary section?

Use an objective if you are a recent graduate or new professional. An objective should focus on three ideas: what position you seek, what industry or environment you prefer and what skills you offer the employer. Use a summary if you have several years of full-time professional experience. This serves as a mini verbal business card that details your background, strengths, most marketable skills and important personality traits.

## Be targeted.

Offer only the specific qualifications you have to best perform the job advertised. Use a customized resume for every job title. If you choose to use a general resume than customize your cover letter to the position.

## Emphasize results.

- Action + goal
- Action + skill developed
- Action + result

Think about how you (1) improved the work process, (2) helped increase the quality or reduced the cost of a product or service that the organization delivers, (3) may have thoroughly satisfied a customer, (4) helped increase the sales or profits of the organization or a particular event, (5) did something that was of value to others, (6) learned valuable skills that are transferable to any work environment, (7) contributed to the organization's goals and/or (8) demonstrated that you were recognized for your achievements or contributions.

## Use action verbs and keywords.

Start each sentence with a descriptive action verb (directed, organized, created, planned, etc.). They add power to your sentences. Using past tense verbs implies that you have done it before. This reassures employers you can do it for them. Do not use personal pronouns (I, you, he, she, etc.).

## Be complete and make points fast.

Do not abbreviate or use acronyms. Spell out street addresses, names of schools, business terms and titles. Employers may not recognize what the letters stand for. Complete sentences are not necessary in resume writing; it is better to use bulleted simple descriptive statements to make a point. Eliminate redundancies.

## One page is best.

Employers say resumes get less than a 15-30 second glance, so say exactly what you mean using the smallest number of words to make the point. Be a skillful editor.

## Make it visually appealing.

The formatting of your resume must be kept consistent, sharp, and professional. Make it reader friendly. A crammed, cramped resume often goes unread. Use white space effectively.

## Do not lie.

Employers have said that more than 50% of applicants try to exaggerate their skills, which is almost always uncovered during interviews and reference checks.

## Be perfect.

This is the No. 1 mistake job hunters make. Your resume must be flawless with no spelling errors, mistakes or typos. Do not trust spell check. Make sure sentences are concise with adequate space between points. Make deletions wherever necessary.

## Don't advertise negative information.

Your resume is the wrong place to advertise that you were laid off, fired or had an extended illness.

## Take the final test.

Are you getting interviews? Are employers calling? This is evidence that your resume is working.

## Do not include the following:

- Pictures of yourself.
- References.
- Personal information such as birth date, height, weight, etc.
- Anything political or religious that can be used to judge you unfairly. It is a good idea to forego this involvement or at least make it neutral.