Your Resume – Gone in 60 Seconds (Part 2)
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Article continued from 'Your Resume – Gone in 60 Seconds (Part 1)'

While adhering to this rule is simple enough for a one page resume, it requires more thought for highly experienced and senior roles. With years or even decades of experience behind a candidate, serious thought needs to be given to information included versus excluded.

Some things to consider with first page content include;

- **Contact Details** – Name and contact details should be easily identifiable at the top of the each page. Contact information should include at minimum, address, email and phone details.

- **Job Title** – Include current role or job title at the top of a resume, below Contact Details. It will add value to an application, particularly if applying for a similar or related role, indicating the applicant already has practical experience.

- It is helpful to include either a well written **Objective Statement or Profile Summary** near the top of the page. An Objective Statement should be a concise statement outlining what type of employment an individual is seeking, and is preferable for less experienced candidates. Alternatively, a Profile Summary should be used for experienced individuals and clearly outline what the candidate has to offer. A Profile Summary would generally include a high level statement of key expertise plus a few major strengths and achievements.

- It is helpful to follow the Objective or Profile Summary with a section outlining the individual's primary '**Areas of Expertise'** (also referred to as Core Competencies, Key Capabilities, etc). These are often depicted in bullet point form, and should be clearly aligned with the stated requirements or selection criteria of the role.

- **Work Experience** – Work history will typically begin on the first page of a resume and for most people will make up the bulk of resume content. Work experience needs to list most recent roles first, and include organisation, position and dates employed.

  Also included should be responsibilities and achievements. This should not be an exhaustive list, but should include those of greatest importance and those aligned to the position description. Be sure to include achievement outcomes and metrics if possible, as they will lend weight to your assertions.

  More emphasis should be placed on recent roles, or previous roles that are aligned with the position being applied for. Older and less relevant roles simply need organisation, position and dates employed.

- Including **academic achievements** on the first page will depend on individual circumstance. Typically, academic information will be included up front if there is limited work experience of note (less than 2-3 years). If relevant work experience is greater than 3 years, then education should appear towards the end of the resume.

  However, like all rules, exceptions exist. You may want to include education up front if you believe it positively differentiates you from the competition or if applying for an academic role which places greater emphasis on academic qualifications.

  Photographs – The general rule is to avoid placing your photograph on your resume unless stipulated by the recruiter. Weight of opinion suggests that adding a photograph is a gamble as it can work either for or against the applicant depending on a variety of factors relating to both the recruiter and the applicant (including sex, age, attractiveness, photo quality, etc). Submitting a photograph is ultimately a gamble that won't necessarily pay off therefore it is generally best to let the resume speak for itself.

A resume should not be a static document. It should be reviewed and redrafted each time an applicant applies for a different role. Different roles have different selection criteria, and a resume should be constantly modified to suit the requirements of each new role. Recruiters are quick to identify and penalise instances of static cover letters or resume's.

The single most significant reason for immediate rejection of a resume remains **spelling and punctuation errors**. Given the leg-up with auto spell check applications, one would expect fewer errors of this nature, however these spelling and grammar applications come with an unfortunate (though sometimes humorous) side effect if not used properly. Some well know examples include the banker who was "highly experienced in all *faucets* of finance', or the Project Manager with 'extensive **steak** holder management skills'.

My advice is simply to check and double check your work. Better yet, also get a third-party to proofread your resume. You would be surprised how often someone else picks up an issue in your resume that you have missed.

For many individuals I would suggest getting some form of help with your resume evaluation. This can be as simple as getting someone you know and trust to review your document, or perhaps enlisting the services of a professional resume writer. A resume writer can add significant value for many reasons, including poor grasp of language, intermittent work history, returning to the workforce after a long break or simply wanting an edge over the competition.

In my experience, an independent or experienced eye cast over a resume will often identify errors, irrelevance or poor communication that the author can miss. Individuals often get 'too close' to their resume to fully appreciate all the nuances of the document, and as a result they 'miss the forest for the trees'.

Like a first date gone horribly wrong, if a resume is not right the first time, don't expect to be called back for a second chance. As outlined above, there is little sentimentality when it comes to harsh realities of resume screening.

However, by following these helpful hints or getting some help from an independent third-party, you will greatly improve the chances of your resume surviving first round screening. And by avoiding the early reject pile the opportunity to further any potential relationship with a prospective employer won't be over before it even begins.