

Your Resume – 10 Tips for the Modern Resume

By A.J. Bond

Job applicants can get confused by the myriad of options and greater flexibility that come with writing a modern day resume. Below we offer 10 tips to ensure that your resume is up to date.

I often get asked the question "What does a good resume look like today?"

To be glib, the simple answer is, "it depends". The industry has moved to a 'horses for courses' approach, and while this is a sensible progression that should produce better outcomes, the greater flexibility has left many jobseekers unsure about what their resume should look like.

Many old resume 'chestnuts' are either no longer valid or only valid under certain circumstances. This article provides a few pointers that resume writers can follow to deal with the issue of writing a modern day resume.

The 'rule of thumb' remains that a resume must be clear, informative and comprehensive *whilst remaining concise*. As long as the jobseeker can adhere to these key requirements, they have a certain amount of flexibility to create a resume that best meets their needs.

1. A strong preference for chronological resumes in the past has given way to resumes that use a varying combination of both chronological and categorical formats. Don't blindly use a format you received from a friend or found on the net. Use one that meets your specific circumstances.
2. A well written Profile or Objective statement at the top of your resume will set the tone – as will a poorly written one. While I would typically suggest a Profile statement for experienced applicants and an Objective statement for junior applicants, there is no reason why use of one should not preclude elements of the other.
3. The inclusion of colour in a resume is acceptable as long as it doesn't detract or distract from the presentation of information. Of course more leeway is accepted for creative market segments like graphic design and the arts.

4. Personal details like DOB, Marital Status, Race or Religion typically have no place on a modern day resume. You would be surprised how often some of these still crop up.
5. I would suggest using a photo at your own peril, because you risk being judged on your looks before your capabilities – either favourably or unfavourably. Though use of a photo is more acceptable in certain industries where image might be fundamental to the role (e.g. modelling, photography, etc).
6. Length does matter. The majority of applicants should be able to get their resume onto 2-3 pages. Longer and you risk boring the reader. Shorter and you risk leaving out critical information. Exceptions are common as long as critical information is not missed or superfluous information included.
7. Critical information should be captured on Page 1 of a resume, preferably in the upper two thirds of the page. No recruiter wants to go searching for important facts.
8. Minimise the use of clichés and bold statements without evidence. Many resumes are choc full of words like proven, dynamic, results oriented and demonstrable, etc without support from concrete examples.
9. Do include achievements. More than anything, the strategic use of achievements along with measurable metrics and outcomes will differentiate you from competitors.
10. Refer to your LinkedIn site – *assuming it is up to date and credible*. Even if you don't provide a link, there is a good chance a recruiter will search for your LinkedIn profile and/or Facebook site regardless.

While the increased flexibility available to the resume writer should produce better outcomes, the writer needs to be careful the right options are chosen.

More than anything, when writing a resume one needs to carefully consider individual circumstances and then use common sense and judgement to determine the best options available.

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