

2021 Resume-Writing Tips



TIP #1:

Be specific when presenting your accomplishments.

Why? Hiring managers want to see that you have a track record of doing a job well, not just performing the basic tasks. This means listing accomplishments instead of job duties. Having an achievement bank is useful, so whenever you're writing your resume, you already have the list of your accomplishments.

Example:

DO SAY: Performed invasive species management on 225 acres of forest, cutting non-native trees and applying herbicide.

DO NOT SAY: Removed invasive species.

TIP #2:

Highlight hard and soft skills.

Why? A 2021 study found that more than two-fifths of hiring professionals reported that applicants lacked the competencies and necessary soft skills for the role.

What skills? According to [TopResume](#), some of the top soft skills employers are looking for in 2021 are problem solving, communication skills, time management, emotional intelligence, a growth mindset, and collaboration.



TIP #3:

Optimize your resume for Applicant Tracking System (ATS) scanning, if applying to a company that uses one.

Why? Forbes reported that 90% of companies are using ATS software in their hiring processes. ATS can scan and rank job applications a company receives online. It serves as an electronic gatekeeper for an employer.

How? To optimize your resume for ATS, there are a few things you can do:

- Submit your resume as a Word document in .doc or .docx, as plain-text files can be more easily scanned by the system.
- Use key words from the job description in your resume.
- Keep your formatting simple. [The Muse](#) has some helpful tips on formatting your resume.
- Use an online tool like ResyMatch.io or Jobscan to help analyze your resume next to a position description.



TIP #4:

Your resume should be concise, on point, and be specific to the job you're applying for.

Why? Hiring managers are skimming resumes for work experience, education, skill set, and personality.

How?

- Be sure to include important info such as your skills, experience, and achievements, but there's no need to include details that aren't related to the job or your work experience.
- [Focus your job application on the position and the industry you're applying for.](#) To do this, read the job posting carefully and take note of the qualifications and skills required by your potential employer.
- Unless applying to a federal job, resumes should be kept to one to two pages. Ideally one page, as recruiters spend less than a minute on their first glance of a resume.



TIP #5:

Use a consistent, easy to read format and keep it simple.

Why? Doing so can aid in the improved delivery of your personal and professional story.

How? Here's some things to keep in mind when formatting your resume:

- Use bullet points. Blocks of text are hard to skim, which is what hiring managers will be doing.
- There are three main formats – reverse chronological order (where most recent experience is at the top), functional format (where the skills for the position receive more emphasis), and combined resume format (both experience and skills are given equal significance). The important thing is to pick one format that highlights your specific skills and experience and use it consistently throughout your resume.
- Use a legible, professional font (and in a readable size)! No **Comic Sans** or **Papyrus**.
- Double-check your formatting! Send your resume to a friend to see what it looks like on the receiving end.

TIP #6:

Make sure your resume is error free.

Why? About 70% of hiring managers say that resume deal-breakers like wrong grammar and unprofessional email addresses often force them to reject an applicant before reading their complete resume. (Business News Daily, 2019)

How? Spelling and grammatical errors are the most common mistakes, so proofread, proofread, proofread! Ask a friend to proofread!

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