



Resume Writing for the Experienced Candidate

For experienced candidates, your resume should show the details of your work experience. In this manner, you can illustrate to your potential employer what experiences, skills, and qualifications you bring to the work environment. Since you will probably have an abundance of relevant accomplishments, you will probably be extending your resume to two pages. Keep in mind, however, that employers typically scan a resume for about 30 seconds; therefore, you want to keep it clear, concise, and easy to read.

Styles

The resume style will depend on your work history and objective in your search. If you are looking to change career directions, a functional style resume will focus on skill sets rather than past work history. A functional style resume can also be a good choice if you have worked at different organizations but have done similar duties in each company, because this resume style will allow you to illustrate your duties and accomplishments in a more concise way. The three resume styles are:

Chronological Style Resume:

The chronological style resume is the most common resume. With this format, your work experience is listed in reverse chronological order. Job duties and accomplishments are included with each position. This resume style works well for job seekers who have continuous employment and relevant work experience.

Functional Style Resume:

The functional resume focuses on skills and is used for individuals who have excellent guidelines for employment. This resume style is ideal for job seekers who are changing careers, who may not have direct employment experience for their targeted position, or who have similar job duties in more than one organization. With this type of resume, transferable experience is listed and highlighted.

Modified Chronological Style Resume:

This style resume is typically used for people with long-time work experience at one location. It is set up like a chronological style resume but includes skill sets under each job to break up duties and accomplishments.

Summary

For experienced job seekers, you want to include a summary. A summary will include four or five skills or qualifications, worded in phrases that match the employer's needs. This section can be typed in either paragraph or bullet form. Consider your overall work history, accomplishments, and job objective when putting together your summary.

Key Career Accomplishments

This section can be a great way to showcase specific accomplishments in the workplace. Start each phrase with an action verb and include the benefit to the employer. Quantifying any resulting statistics can be an excellent way to prove these accomplishments.

Experience

The experience section can include company names and dates as in a chronological style resume or can include key skill sets as in the functional style. The format will depend on the targeted career objective, your work experience, and the length of your resume. It is important that you keep your resume to two pages in length. In order to accomplish this, you may have to try out several styles until you find a resume style that highlights your skills and accomplishments in the best way. As you describe your work duties, start each phrase with an action verb.

Work History

This section is only used with a functional style resume. The work history section will include the name of the organization, city and state where the company is located, the years that you worked at the organization, and your job title. As a rule of thumb, you only need to include work for the past ten years to prevent age discrimination. However, if you want to show an employer that you are an experienced job candidate, you might want to include a longer work history.

Keep in mind that you might be asked about any gaps in work history. Since layoffs and downsizings are a normal part of today's work experience, there is not the negative impact that such gaps may have had in the past. However, you need to be able to explain in an interview why there is a gap. (Example: I was downsized from my previous job at ABC Company because there was a restructure within the organization after it was bought by XYZ Company. Although I wasn't planning on moving on for several years, this layoff has given me the opportunity to consider what I want in a career.)

Education

If you have graduated more than five years ago, don't include your graduation date or GPA in this section. Add your universities in reverse chronological order, listing your degree, university name, city, and state of the university location.

Additional Headings

Any additional information that shows an employer that you are refining desired skills can be added as an additional heading. Some typical headings are: Professional Development, Continued Education, Associations, Volunteer Experience, and Presentations.

General Guidelines

It is important that there are no spelling or grammar mistakes on your resume, so make sure a career services professional or several trusted individuals read over the resume before sending it to a potential employer.