

RÉSUMÉ TIPS

Your résumé is your introduction to a recruiter or an employer. Based on these few pages they decide if you move to the next phase of the recruitment process or not.

Understanding the recruitment process may help you to tailor your résumé. There are some very simple reasons why your résumé must be easy to read and easy to work with. Recruiters see hundreds of resumes each week, and if a resume is hard to follow, read or understand you may miss out at the first step.

Most recruiters will reformat your résumé to fit one of their standard templates before they submit it to a client. If you have used text boxes and complex tables or unusual fonts – this is all going to make life very hard for the agent and again, may put your CV and you in the too hard basket. It shouldn't, but the reality is that if your CV is not easy to read, follow and work with you are penalising yourself from the start.

Your résumé is your headline, your wrapping paper, so make sure that it sells you. If the headline does not capture the reader they will not read the detail of the article. If the wrapping is not interesting, the present is assumed to be dull.

So..... your résumé needs to be:

- Concise and to the point
- Easy to read, well formatted
- Free from spelling and grammar mistakes
- Detailed, but not too long

Résumés range from a single page of A4 at one extreme to a full 20-page document including a cover page and contents page at the other. Both would have little success with most readers.

How much is too much? In the world of résumé writing this is like asking 'what is the meaning of life?'

Unfortunately for the job seeker, résumé review is very subjective, but there are some points that you may help you decide if your resume makes the grade.

- A recruiter or employer may receive upwards of 40 résumés for a single role – that's a lot of résumés to read. The human brain and eyes get tired and if faced

- with a 15 page monster, the reviewer may ‘skim’ and try to pick out the important bits – they should need to. Your résumé should only include the important bits!
- Don’t pad the résumé with irrelevant details. Employers and recruiters do not want to read half a page about how your previous employer was a world leader in providing Telecoms Billing Software. They want to know what you did in order to make their billing software better. A few lines about the company and application are good, but keep it brief – remember who you are trying to sell.....**yourself!**
 - Make sure all the really important points are listed at the beginning.
 - It might look nice to have a cover page – but this just wastes paper and is not necessary. A Personal Summary section on the first page detailing your name, address, telephone number, e-mail address is enough.
 - Include a ‘Summary’ or ‘Profile’ on the first page. A paragraph that gives a brief incite into your skills and experience. This only needs to be a few lines and certainly no more than about 10-15 lines, but should tell the reader exactly what you are capable of.

EG

A career tester with 10 years experience of testing and test management. Experienced in formulating test strategies and test plans across all test phases. Have practical experience of writing and executing test cases using both V-Model and Agile approaches, testing CICS Mainframes, VB user interfaces, C++ client server applications, functional websites, complex multi tier solutions running Java presentation layers over Orbix and MTS middle tiers and Oracle databases, using XML and MQ communication protocols. 5 years team leading and test management experience.

- List technical/application experience, but make sure that you are clear on what applications/platforms you have tested and what you have used. As a tester including a bullet point that states ‘C++’, ‘VB’ or ‘Oracle 9i’ means nothing. Can you write C++ code or have you tested an application written in C++? There is a huge difference. Make sure you are clear on what you mean.
- There is divided opinion about including a work summary which is then followed by detailed work experience. Ask yourself what value it adds to list your employers and job roles, then list it all again and include details of your roles, responsibilities and achievements. You may decide that it does add value – in which case include it.
- When listing your role, work backwards from today. Include all jobs – even if they do not seem relevant.
For example – 2 months working at the local shop.....did you have responsibility for cashing up and locking up at night? This shows that you are trustworthy – things that seem irrelevant to you, may trigger something in the reader. Obviously don’t go into huge detail – a line or 2 about ‘irrelevant’ jobs is enough.
- Make sure that you include the following when detailing your work experience:
 - Employer name and brief address

- Start and end date
- Your title/role description
- List your responsibilities
- List your achievements in the role (very important)
 - If you got promoted - say so
 - If you got a team player of the month award – say so
 - If you were responsible for a quality initiative – say so
- Try not to concentrate only on what you did, but also talk about how. For example, instead of saying “*Wrote test cases*” try something like “*Extracted testable requirement from Business and Technical specifications and created appropriate test cases to verify the compliance and correctness.*”
- List the application/tools used as part of your role
- List the applications/platforms tested including the languages the applications were written in.
- Avoid writing long sentences and paragraphs – use bullet points. Bullets are easier on the eye and easier to digest. Remember that you want the reader to read and not skim, so make the format as easy to read as possible.
- How many of you are struggling to read this article? Well this is only page 2. Image being an employer on page 8 of résumé number 12!
- Include your educational details – list subjects passed and grades
- Detail any courses attended. Be sure to include the course date, the details of the provider.
- List any other skills that you have
- List any foreign languages
- Finally list some out of work interests – this make you appear more human and may help break the ice at an interview.
- References – include at least 2 referees from previous roles. Make sure that you have correct and up to date contact details for them and check with the referees that they are happy to give references.

Once you have finished your first draft, make sure you proof read it, spell check it and ask a friend or family member to proof read it for you.

Make any changes then re-read your second draft. Make sure that you have included all relevant detail and check that there is no ‘waffle’ that could be trimmed out.

Here is a good way to judge how informative your résumé really. Ask a friend or relative who does not know or understand exactly what you do for a living to read your résumé. Once they have finished ask them what you do for a job. If they can tell you – success!



There is not one right way to write a resume, but if you keep in mind your audience and the reason for writing the résumé, you should be most of the way there.



Some simple Do's and Do not's

Do:

- Make sure that the Resume looks good
- Make it idiot proof – make it easy to understand what you actually do
- Include contact details – make sure that you are easy to reach
- Include a personal statement at the beginning that sells you
- Include some hobbies or interests
- Use a simple font such as Arial or Times New Roman
- Include short clarification of any career breaks
- Use space effectively and make sure that your Resume is easy to follow

Do not:

- Include a coversheet
- Write in the 3rd person
- Use words like 'Consultant' in job title – this does not mean anything
- Include details about marital status, ethnicity, health, religion
- Use Microsoft Templates (they are too complex and include too many tables, cells, and text boxes)
- Use text boxes
- Use tables unnecessarily
- Use bold text to highlight **keywords**
- E-mail resume in PDF format