

10 tips to an excellent résumé

No document in your career search is as important as your résumé. Make sure it is the very best representation of your unique skills, talents, and experiences.

1. Limit your brilliance to one page

Remember that your résumé is a marketing tool and not a laundry list of everything you've ever done. By keeping your résumé short, you're demonstrating that you can edit yourself and sell your skills clearly and concisely.

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2. Professionalize your contact info

Résumés featuring email addresses like *ILovePuppies@internetserviceprovider.com* may not seem professional to the company to which you are applying. Make sure your email address and the voice mail messages on any phone numbers you list are 100 percent professional and appropriate.

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3. Include unpaid experience

Just because you didn't get compensated for certain work doesn't mean it shouldn't count as experience for your résumé. By all means include internships, volunteer work, and part-time jobs if you achieved significant results or learned important skills in those positions.

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4. Quantify your results

Employers don't just want to know what you did; they also want to know what results you accomplished. How many people did you oversee as a store manager? How much money did you save the junior class as treasurer? Quantifying your accomplishments demonstrates not only what you achieved, but also the fact that you track your results.

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5. Prioritize your points

When you list bullet points under each position or activity on your résumé, be sure to place the most important task, accomplishment, or responsibility first. Most readers of your résumé will pay close attention to what you've chosen to feature as the first item on each list.

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6. Customize your résumé for different opportunities

Employers can tell when they are seeing a generic résumé that is being blasted out to anyone and everyone. It's fine to have such a résumé as a template, but then you need to customize it for various opportunities by featuring the experience, keywords, and activities that best suit the requirements of that particular position.

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7. Include only interesting interests

When it comes to listing interests or hobbies on your résumé, only mention something that is particularly unique, uncommon, or memorable. For example, "Founding president of first-ever Tae Kwon Do Club at my university" or "three-time finisher of Chicago Marathon." Generic interests such as "travel and reading" are nice, but they don't add much.

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8. Delete the reference references

Don't waste precious space on your résumé with "References available upon request." Potential employers will request a list of references if they want one.

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9. Never lie, exaggerate, or twist the truth

There are so many reasons not to lie on a résumé. First of all, if your lie or truth stretching gets discovered, you'll lose a job opportunity with that company forever. Second, if you exaggerate your skills, such as being fluent in French when you really just studied it in junior high, your lie will become extremely obvious the day you start your job and you lack the skills you said you had. You should certainly cast yourself in the most positive light, but never, ever take it too far.

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10. Proofread, and then proofread again

Finally, there is absolutely, positively no excuse for a single typo or grammar mistake on a résumé. Once you've proofread your résumé and feel confident it's perfect, have at least two other people review it for mistakes, misspellings, and formatting glitches. You can never check your résumé too many times.

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