

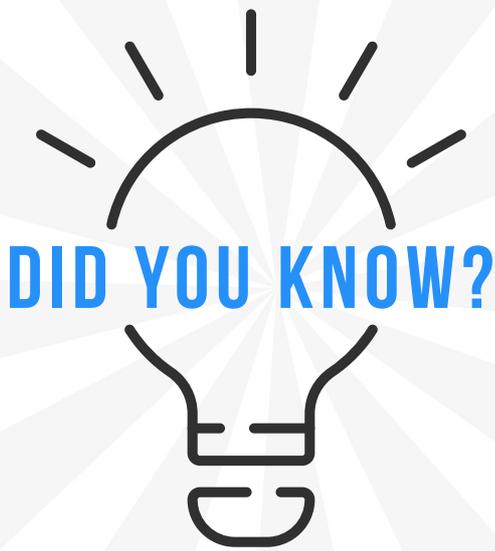
HOW TO CRAFT A WINNING RESUME THAT WILL
HELP YOU STAND OUT FROM THE CROWD

Burnett
SPECIALISTS

Resume Writing Guide for Job Seekers

In a competitive job market, having a well-crafted resume can make the difference between landing an interview and being overlooked. This e-guide provides a comprehensive framework for job seekers looking to create effective, standout resumes.

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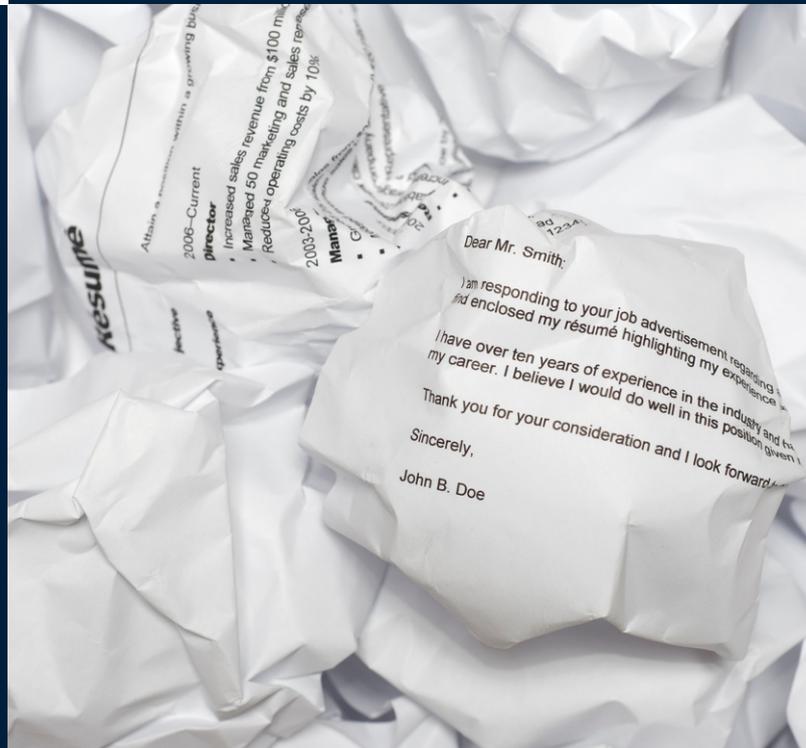
DID YOU KNOW?

7.4 SECONDS

Is the average amount of time a resume is reviewed during the initial application screening process as stated by an eye-tracking study conducted by Ladders.

83%

of HR professionals agreed that a great cover letter can land an applicant an interview even if their resume isn't good enough according to a survey from ResumeLab.



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54%

of recruiters said a generic resume that's not customized to the job is the biggest turnoff, according to a survey conducted by Jobvite.

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How online applications work...

Many companies and recruiting firms use a platform called an ATS to help expedite the hiring process for employers and job seekers.

Why use an ATS? The number of resumes a hiring manager or recruiter receives for a single job posting can vary widely depending on the industry, location, and level of the position. However, it is not uncommon for a company to receive hundreds of applications for a single position. At Burnett Specialists, we average 270-300 jobs posted at a time averaging at least 100-150 applies per job.

THE IMPORTANCE OF FIT

Knowing your resume could be 1 out of 200 can sometimes be discouraging. Just remember, it's not just about being the "best" candidate in a general sense, but the best fit for the specific role and the company culture. If you read a job description, don't just stop there; learn more about the company culture through research. Then, tailor your resume to show why you're a great fit. This will set you apart from the crowd, giving you the advantage of landing an interview.



WHAT IS AN ATS SYSTEM?

An Applicant Tracking System (ATS) is software that assists companies in managing their recruitment process.

Many companies use Applicant Tracking Systems (ATS) to filter out resumes that don't contain certain keywords or phrases that are present in the job description. Tailoring your resume increases the likelihood of it passing through these systems.



Remember, an ATS is designed to make the recruitment process more efficient, but it's always a human who makes the final decision. Once your resume has passed through the ATS, it needs to impress a human reader. So balance the need for ATS-optimization with clear, persuasive writing that showcases your skills, experience, and fit for the job.

What are the different sections of a resume?

A well-structured resume can be critical to making a positive impression on potential employers.

CONTACT INFORMATION:

This should be at the very top of your resume. It typically includes your name, phone number, email address, and sometimes your LinkedIn profile or professional website if applicable.

OBJECTIVE STATEMENT / SUMMARY / PROFESSIONAL PROFILE:

This is an optional section where you can concisely describe your professional goals; This section is where you detail your job history.

WORK EXPERIENCE:

For each position, list the job title, the company, the dates you worked there, and bullet points describing your responsibilities and achievements. This should be in reverse chronological order, with the most recent job first.



Remember, the order and the included sections may vary depending on your career stage, the job you're applying for, and cultural norms in your region.

The goal is to present a clear, comprehensive, and targeted picture of your professional history and skills.

SKILLS:

Here you can list the technical and soft skills you have that are relevant to the job you're applying for.

EDUCATION:

List your educational background, starting with the highest degree first. Include the name of the institution, its location, your degree, and the dates you attended.

CERTIFICATIONS/LICENSES:

If you have any professional certifications or licenses, list them here.

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS / MEMBERSHIPS:

If you are a member of any professional organizations, list them in this section.

AWARDS / HONORS:

If you've received any awards or honors, particularly those that are relevant to the job you're applying for, include them in this section.

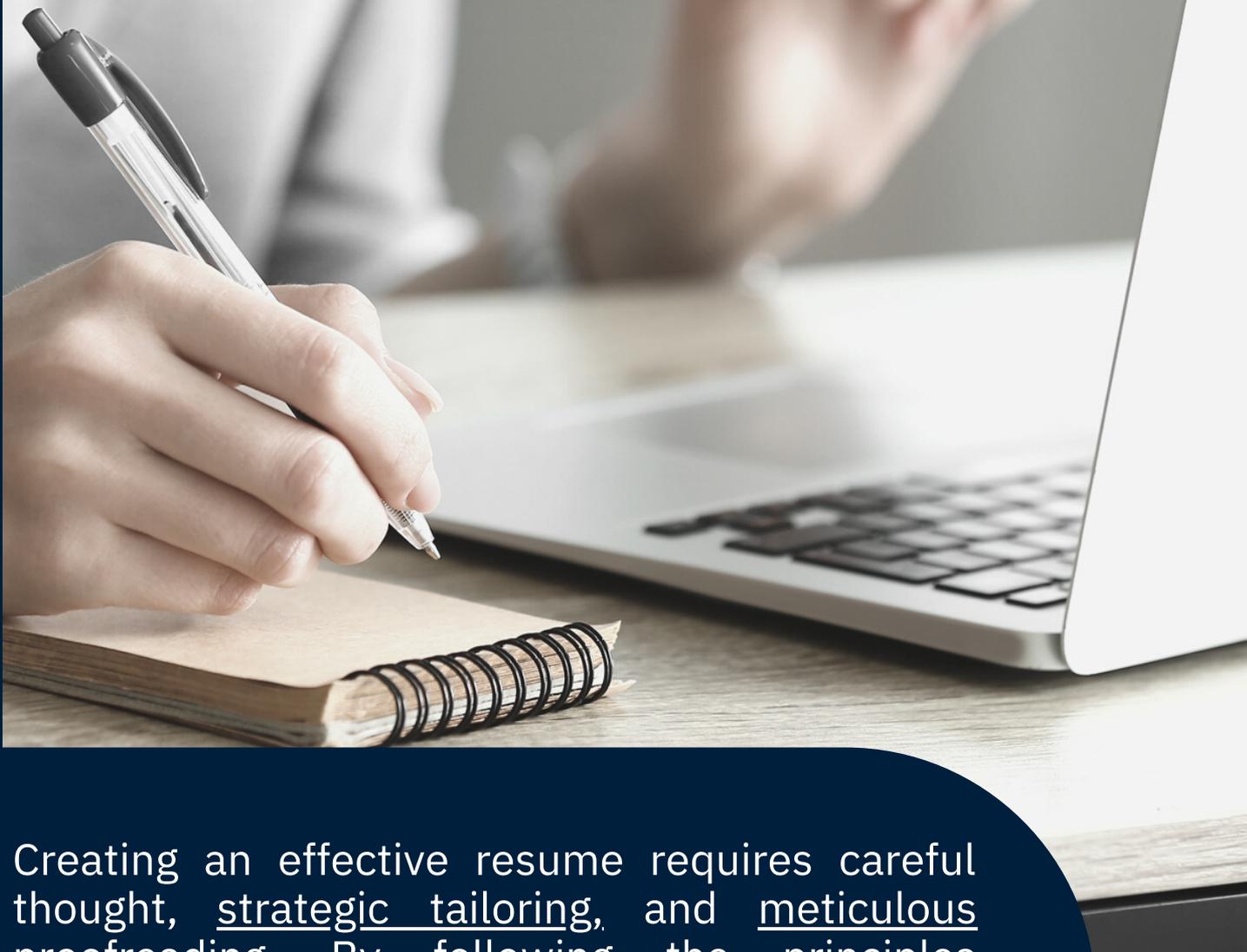
VOLUNTEER WORK / COMMUNITY INVOLVMENT:

This section can demonstrate your involvement in the community and your commitment to volunteer work.

REFERENCES:

While it's more common these days to provide references upon request, some people still include them on their resumes.

How do you **CRAFT A WINNING RESUME?**



Creating an effective resume requires careful thought, strategic tailoring, and meticulous proofreading. By following the principles outlined in this white paper, job seekers can significantly increase their chances of landing an interview. Always remember, your resume is your first impression, make it count.



WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF A RESUME?

Remember these two things: to make a good first impression & to get an interview.

Your resume is your professional introduction, a snapshot that lets prospective employers quickly understand your qualifications, experience, skills, and why you're an excellent fit for the job. It should not be exhaustive but rather a summary of your career, focusing on aspects that align with the job you're seeking.

Often, your resume is the first thing a potential employer will see from you. A well-organized, well-written resume can help you make a strong first impression, showing that you're a professional who's serious about the application.

Ultimately, the goal of a resume is to get you an interview. By effectively summarizing your qualifications and selling your skills, you can convince hiring managers that you're worth considering for the position, leading to an invitation for an interview.



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CHRONOLOGICAL VS. FUNCTIONAL RESUMES

Which type is right for you?

- **Chronological Resumes:** These are the most common format, detailing your work experience in reverse chronological order. They work best for people with a clear career progression in a specific field.
- **Functional Resumes:** These focus on skills and experiences rather than chronological work history. They are ideal for people with gaps in employment, career changers, or those new to the workforce.



PROPER RESUME FORMATTING

Your resume needs to be easy to read and professionally presented. This means having clear headings, ample white space, and a consistent font throughout. Also, restrict the length to a maximum of *two pages*. Your goal is to ensure that recruiters or hiring managers can easily skim through and spot the necessary information.

FILE FORMAT

The most ***ATS-friendly** file format for resumes is a simple **.docx** or **.pdf**. These formats are universally accepted, and ATS software can easily parse text from these types of files. However, PDFs can sometimes cause problems if the ATS can't read the embedded text correctly, so **.docx** might be a safer bet.

Remember, an ATS is designed to make the recruitment process more efficient, but it's always a human who makes the final decision. Once your resume has passed through the ATS, it needs to impress a human reader. So balance the need for ATS-optimization with clear, persuasive writing that showcases your skills, experience, and fit for the job.

LAYOUT FORMAT

The layout should be as straightforward and uncluttered as possible. Here are some guidelines:

- **Avoid images, columns, and text boxes:** These can confuse the ATS and cause it to miss important information.
- **Use standard section headings:** The ATS will be looking for familiar headers like 'Work Experience', 'Education', 'Skills', etc.
- **Stick to standard fonts:** Fonts like "Arial", "Times New Roman", "Calibri", or "Helvetica" are all easily readable by an ATS.
- **Avoid tables:** Some ATSs can struggle to read tables correctly.
- **Use bullet points instead of paragraphs:** This makes your resume easier for both an ATS and a human reader to skim.
- **Include keywords:** Make sure your resume includes the relevant keywords that the job description uses. Many ATSs rank resumes based on how well they match the job description.



TAILOR YOUR RESUME FOR EACH APPLICATION

According to a survey conducted by Jobvite, **54% of recruiters said a generic resume that's not customized to the job is the biggest turnoff.** Tailoring a resume for each specific job you apply to can significantly increase your chances of getting an interview.

In terms of general statistics, a 2020 Talent Board report found that, **on average, individuals apply to 26 jobs before getting an offer.** However, this varies widely by industry, location, level of position, and other factors.

HOW DOES TAILORING YOUR RESUME BENEFIT YOU?



It's important to remember that job searching can often be a numbers game, and it usually takes more than one application to land a job. Without tailoring your resume to each job, you should expect to apply to many more positions than if you took the time to craft your resume for each position you apply for.

✓ ATS SYSTEMS

As previously mentioned, many companies use Applicant Tracking Systems (ATS) to filter out resumes that don't contain certain keywords or phrases that are present in the job description. Tailoring your resume increases the likelihood of it passing through these systems.

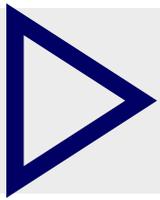
✓ RELEVANCE

A tailored resume highlights your most relevant skills and experiences, making it easier for hiring managers to see how you'd fit into the role.

✓ DEMONSTRATES INTEREST

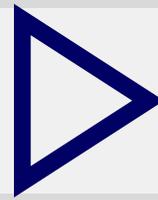
By tailoring your resume, you demonstrate that you've taken the time to understand the job and the company, which can make you more attractive to employers.

GUIDELINES FOR including experience



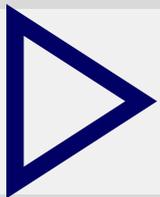
Relevance & Recency:

Include roles that are most relevant to the job you're applying for. If you have a long work history, you may not need to include jobs from early in your career, especially if they're not related to your current industry or the position you're applying for. The last 10-15 years of experience usually gets the most attention.



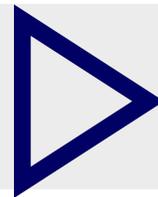
Senior-Level Candidates:

If you're a senior-level candidate with a lengthy work history, you can summarize your earlier roles under a heading like "Previous work experience" or "Early career," without going into detail about each job.



Entry-Level Candidates:

If you're just starting out in your career, include internships, part-time jobs, volunteer work, and relevant academic projects. Again, focus on the skills and experiences that are most relevant to the job you're applying for.



Changing Careers:

If you're switching careers, focus on transferable skills and any relevant certifications or training. You might also include a "Relevant Skills" section to highlight these competencies.

How many bullet points to list?

The number of bullet points per section on a resume can vary depending on the section and your level of experience. However, here are some general guidelines:

- **WORK EXPERIENCE:**

- For each job you've held, aim for 3-5 bullet points describing your roles and accomplishments. If you're a more senior candidate or the job is particularly complex, you may reach 6-8 points. Please remember to be concise and focus on achievements and impact rather than just responsibilities.

- **SKILLS:**

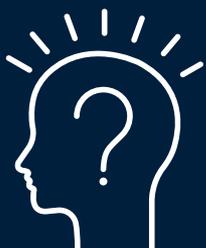
- The number of skills to list varies widely, but 5-10 is generally a reasonable range. Please make sure they're relevant to the job you're applying for, and try to mix hard and soft skills.

- **EDUCATION:**

- Usually, 1-3 bullet points per degree are enough, highlighting things like relevant coursework, honors, or extracurricular activities.

- **PROJECTS OR VOLUNTEER WORK:**

- Aim for 2-4 bullet points per item, focusing on what you did and the impact of your work.



Remember, the key is relevance and quality, not quantity. Each bullet point should offer something valuable to a potential employer, and directly or indirectly relate to the job you're applying for.



QUANTIFY ACHIEVEMENTS

Highlighting quantifiable achievements instead of just listing responsibilities can make a candidate stand out. Specific numbers or results can give recruiters a better idea of a candidate's potential impact.

A resume allows you to showcase your achievements and accomplishments in previous jobs. Quantifying achievements can significantly enhance the impact of your resume. It's a way to provide concrete evidence of your skills and abilities.

HERE ARE SOME TIPS ON HOW YOU CAN DO THIS:

✓ USE NUMBERS

Numbers are the easiest way to quantify achievements. For example, instead of saying "led a team on a successful project," you could say "led a team of 5 in completing a project 3 weeks ahead of schedule." Instead of "increased sales," say "increased sales by 20% in Q1 2023."

✓ INCLUDE FINANCIAL FIGURES

If you contributed to earning or saving money for the company, definitely include those figures. Did you bring in new clients or increase revenue? By how much? Did you make a process more efficient, saving time and money? Provide estimates of these amounts.

✓ HIGHLIGHT ACHIEVEMENTS WITH PERCENTAGES

Percentages are great for showing improvements in efficiency or reductions in costs or time. For example, "reduced customer service call time by 15% by implementing a new script."

✓ MENTION SPECIFIC PROJECTS

If you've worked on specific projects, mention them and quantify the impact. For example, "managed a project with a \$500,000 budget," or "led a marketing campaign that increased web traffic by 30%."

✓ USE TIMEFRAMES

If you've achieved something significant in a short timeframe, mention that. For example, "within the first month, identified and corrected 3 major process bottlenecks, increasing overall productivity by 25%."

✓ INCLUDE RANKINGS OR RATINGS

If you've been recognized as a top performer or received high ratings in a performance review, include this information.

✓ USE SCALE OR SCOPE

If you worked on a large-scale project or if your work had broad implications, include that. For example, "coordinated logistics for a conference attended by over 500 participants."



Remember that it's important to be honest when you're quantifying your achievements. Don't inflate your figures, as this could lead to issues if a potential employer decides to verify your claims.

INCORPORATE KEYWORDS



Since Applicant Tracking Systems (ATS) are often used by employers to filter and sort through large numbers of applications. These systems can automatically scan your resume for keywords and phrases from the job description to help determine whether your application is a good match for the position.



Remember, while it's important to get past the ATS, your ultimate goal is to impress the human hiring manager who reads your resume. Balance the use of keywords with clear, compelling descriptions of your skills and experiences.

IDENTIFY THE KEYWORDS

Look at the job description carefully and identify important skills, experiences, and qualifications that the employer is looking for. These are usually listed in the "responsibilities" and "requirements" sections. Words and phrases that appear repeatedly or are listed as 'essential' are particularly important.



USE EXACT PHRASES:

Once you've identified the keywords, incorporate them into your resume using the exact wording as much as possible. If the job description mentions "project management" or "customer service," ensure those exact phrases are in your resume.



INCLUDE KEYWORDS THROUGHOUT YOUR RESUME:

While it's particularly important to include keywords in the skills and experience sections of your resume, they should also appear in your summary or objective statement, as well as in the descriptions of your roles and achievements. However, ensure the usage of keywords feels natural and doesn't disrupt the readability of your resume.



USE KEYWORDS IN CONTEXT

Rather than simply listing keywords, use them in context to describe your experiences and accomplishments. For example, instead of just listing "project management" as a skill, you could say, "Utilized project management skills to oversee a team of five and successfully deliver a key project on time and within budget."



PRIORITIZE RELEVANT SKILLS:

If you're applying for a role that requires specific technical skills, be sure to mention those prominently in your resume. For instance, if the job description mentions specific programming languages, tools, or systems, and you're proficient with them, ensure they're in your skills section and are also mentioned in the context of your past work experience.



OPTIMIZE YOUR RESUME'S TITLE AND SUBHEADINGS:

Not only the body of your text, but your headings should also include the relevant keywords. For instance, if you are applying for a 'Content Marketing Specialist' position, you can have a previous job experience titled 'Content Marketing Coordinator' instead of just 'Marketing Coordinator'.



AVOID KEYWORD STUFFING:

It's important to use keywords effectively, but avoid overloading your resume with them. The text should still read naturally, and your skills and experiences should be accurately represented.





SHOWCASE RELEVANT SKILLS

With a resume, you can highlight the specific skills you've developed throughout your career. These can be both technical (like proficiency in a certain programming language) and soft skills (like communication or teamwork).

Create a distinct section for 'Skills' where you can list down both hard (technical) and soft (interpersonal) skills relevant to the job. The number of skills to list can vary widely, but generally, 5-10 is a good range. Highlight any industry-specific software you are proficient in, languages you speak, and any other abilities that could set you apart.

SOFT SKILLS

These are less tangible and harder to quantify, but are equally important for success in the workplace. They often relate to how you work with others and handle your work.

EXAMPLES OF SOFT SKILLS:

- communication
- teamwork
- problem-solving
- leadership
- adaptability
- time management
- empathy
- conflict resolution, and so on



HARD SKILLS

These are specific, teachable abilities that can be defined and measured. They may be job-specific or industry-specific and are usually gained through education, training, or on-the-job experience.

EXAMPLES OF HARD SKILLS:

- include proficiency in a foreign language
- knowledge of a specific software program
- ability to type a certain number of words per minute
- machine operation
- programming
- SEO/SEM marketing
- data analysis
- and so forth

While hard skills are more straightforward to demonstrate on a resume (you can list certifications, degrees, courses, projects, etc.), soft skills can be harder to show. Often, you can demonstrate soft skills by providing examples of your work experience, such as successful team projects, leadership roles, or problem-solving initiatives.

Most jobs require a combination of both hard and soft skills. When applying for a job, it's important to study the job description to understand what specific hard and soft skills the employer is seeking, and to highlight those skills in your resume and cover letter.



LISTING REFERENCES

In many cases, job seekers choose to include a statement like "References available upon request" at the bottom of their resume, rather than including the references themselves. This is generally acceptable, and it can save space on your resume for more important content.

However, if you choose to include a reference section on your resume, here are two common ways to do so:

✓ TRADITIONAL LIST:

References:

John Smith

Former Supervisor, ABC Company

Phone: (123) 456-7890

Email: johnsmith@example.com

Jane Doe

Former Colleague, XYZ Company

Phone: (234) 567-8901

Email: janedoe@example.com

In this format, you're simply providing a list of your references and their contact information. Be sure to include the reference's name, your relationship to them, and their phone number and email address.

✓ DESCRIPTIVE LIST:

References:

John Smith

Position: Former Supervisor at ABC Corporation

Phone: (123) 456-7890

Email: johnsmith@example.com

Details: John was my direct supervisor at ABC Corp., where I worked as a Sales Associate. He can speak to my customer service skills and punctuality.

Jane Doe

Position: Former Colleague at XYZ Company
Phone: (234) 567-8901

Email: janedoe@example.com

Details: Jane and I worked closely on several XYZ Company marketing projects. She can speak to my teamwork and project management skills.

In this format, you're not only providing the reference's contact information but also giving a brief description of your relationship and what they can speak to. This can provide more context for potential employers.



Regardless of the format you choose, remember to always ask your references for permission before including them, and inform them about the job you're applying for so they can be prepared to provide relevant information if they are contacted.

PROOFREAD THOROUGHLY

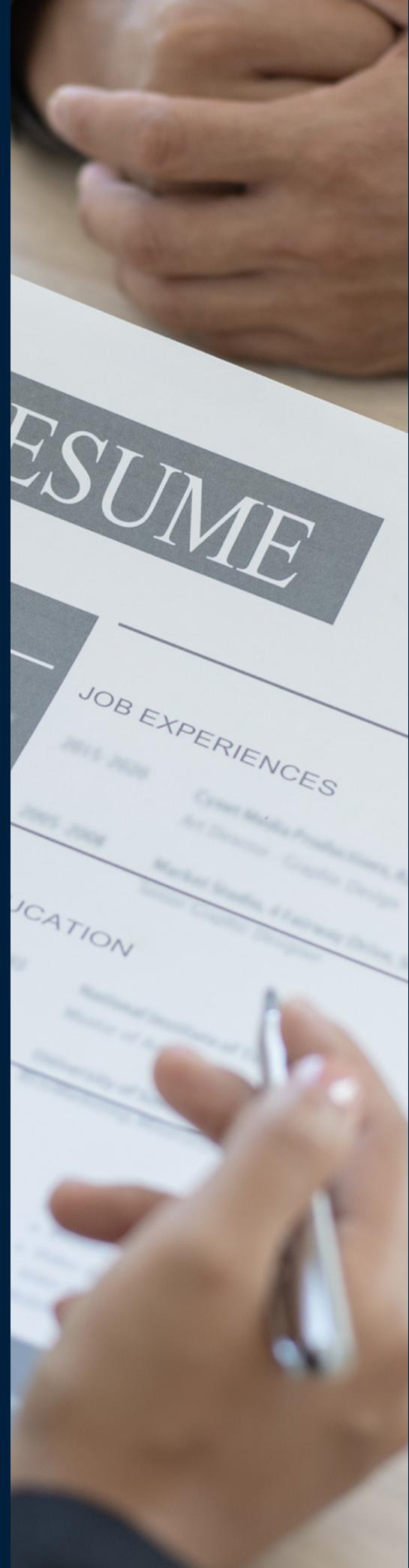
ERRORS CAN BE DEAL-BREAKERS

Even the most impressive resumes can be undermined by spelling or grammatical errors. A CareerBuilder survey found that 58% of resumes have typos. Given how quickly resumes are scanned (7.4 seconds) during the initial resume screen stage, even a small typo can be enough to dismiss a candidate.

Always proofread your resume several times.

There are many free online tools to analyze your writing for grammatical errors. Some writing tools also offer a paid subscription upgrade in addition to the free version unlocking extra features such as phrase re-wording suggestions, selecting the tone of voice you want to portray, the audience type, and more.

If you choose to use an online proofreading tool, consider having a mentor, career coach, or trusted friend review it, too. If the position you are applying for goes through an ATS, the next step will include one or more human readers studying it and must be impressed by it before they even contact you to set up an interview.





Don't forget to include **your contact information**

Include your full name, professional email address, and phone number. It's also common to include LinkedIn profiles or professional websites if applicable. Make sure all information is up-to-date.

Things to keep in mind during your job search...

POSITIVE VIBES ARE EVERYTHING

- **Competition for a job is a good thing.**
 - A large number of applicants means the job is desirable. This is why putting your best foot forward in each application is imperative. Your time and effort will be worth it in the long run.
- **Focus on individuality.**
 - Consider your unique skills, experiences, and perspectives as valuable assets to help you stand out.
- **Each application is also a potential learning opportunity.**
 - Even in a competitive field, applying for a job provides a chance for personal and professional growth. You will learn to write more effective resumes and cover letters, perform better in interviews, become more resilient, and set yourself up to land the right job at the right time.

APPLY TO MULTIPLE POSITIONS

Different positions move faster than others in the hiring process. Also, different people within the same organization may be reviewing resumes for different positions they have posted.

USE MULTIPLE RESOURCES TO APPLY

Put your resume out there in as many places as possible. Don't rely on one resource to be the fastest way of getting a job.

- **apply on the company's website**
- **use external job boards to apply, i.e., Indeed, LinkedIn, etc**
 - it's not uncommon for companies to post certain positions in certain places depending on the type of positions, location, etc.
- **Work with a staffing and recruiting firm**
- **Ask your friends, family, and former colleagues for referrals**
- **Check local news or government websites for a local job section**
- **Join job search groups or industry-related groups on social media**

HOW TO WRITE A WINNING RESUME
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