

RESUMES

5 RULES FOR BUILDING A GREAT RESUME

Takeaway Points

- A resume should begin with a *Summary* (or, if you're a student, new grad, or career changer, an *Objective*). Use this space to tell employers who you are and how your skills and qualifications meet their needs.
- Tell the potential employer what you've accomplished in your current and previous roles to show how you made a difference.
- Don't start your sentences with *I* or *We* or *Our*.
- Leave out jobs from more than about 10 or 15 years ago, unless they still have direct relevance to your current career path.

By: Team Pongo

Your resume has one job: To convince the reader that you're a candidate worth interviewing.

Here are five rules to help you craft a resume that does its job:

1. **Summarize Your Unique Value**
2. **Communicate with Confidence**
3. **Watch Your Language**
4. **Key in on Keywords**
5. **Keep it Concise**

What do these really mean?

1. Summarize Your Unique Value

A resume should begin with a **Summary** (or, if you're a student, new grad, or career changer, an **Objective**). Use this space to tell employers who you are and how your skills and qualifications meet their needs.

Although your real objective may be to get away from your micro-managing boss or shorten your commute, don't say that on your resume! Your Summary or Objective is where you explain how and why you are uniquely qualified to contribute to the company.

Bonus: *Once you've crafted a solid message that summarizes your value, you can use it as the basis for your response to every hiring manager's favorite line: "Tell me about yourself."*

2. Communicate with Confidence

Tell the potential employer what you've accomplished in your current and previous roles to show how you made a difference. This is not the time to be humble or modest, or to assume the employer will read between the lines.

For instance, if your resume just states the facts, without context (e.g., "Sold 50,000 widgets between January and June"), the reader won't know if that's better, worse, or the same as what the company had achieved in the past. But a confident statement like "Boosted widget sales 35% in the first six months" or "Increased widget sales from 40K to 50K within six months" is bound to jump off the page.

3. Watch Your Language

Don't start your sentences with **I** or **We** or **Our**.

In fact, **don't even use full sentences**. Bulleted statements that begin with strong action verbs typically have the most impact.

RESUMES: 5 RULES FOR BUILDING A GREAT RESUME

“Once you’ve crafted a solid message that summarizes your value, you can use it as the basis for your response to every hiring manager’s favorite line: ‘Tell me about yourself.’”

Did you know?

Pongo’s Resume Builder provides you with all the tools you need to enhance your job search. You can build as many resumes as you like!

Here are two ways to say the same thing. The first is a bad example; the second is much better:

Too Chatty and Long

- *I was assigned to lead a safety project team that was supposed to reduce our accident rates. Our efforts were successful, because my boss told me the company’s workers’ compensation costs were improving. My coworkers were happy, and we got more work done.*

Concise and Businesslike

- *Spearheaded team safety project that eliminated accident hazards, reduced workers’ compensation costs, improved employee morale, and increased productivity.*

That kind of statement is even better if you can quantify the improvements (e.g., “... reduced workers’ compensation costs by 27%”).

4. Key in on Keywords

Here’s an awful truth: Resumes, in many cases, are not even read. Rather, they’re scanned (either by a machine or by someone who is not the hiring manager). What they’re scanning for are keywords or phrases that match their hiring criteria.

Not sure what keywords to put in your resume? Read the job description for a position that interests you, as well as descriptions for similar jobs. Then read your target companies’ web sites. Certain words and phrases will come up again and again – those are keywords. Work them into your resume to make it easy for the scanner to spot what’s important.

5. Keep it Concise

The old rule about resumes never exceeding one page is not necessarily true anymore. If you can fit it all comfortably on one page, that’s ideal. But after you’ve been in the working world for awhile, your resume will probably need a second page. A third page (or more) is almost never a good thing.

The new “rule” is that two pages is fine, as long as everything on the resume is relevant to the job you’re seeking, and recent enough to add value. Leave out jobs from more than about 10 or 15 years ago, unless they still have direct relevance to your current career path.

With these rules, you’re on your way to crafting an effective, interview-worthy resume!

www.pongoresume.com

Pongo Resume is a premier, full-service online resource for job seekers. The Pongo Resume web site provides all the tools, templates, and support you need to write professional resumes and cover letters, ace tough interviews, and secure a great job. Pongo users generate over 100,000 resumes per month. Privately held and headquartered in Northborough, Massachusetts, Pongo Resume currently has more than 5 million registered users and averages over a half-million unique visitors per month.