



Belmont Abbey
COLLEGE

15 Tips for Writing Winning Resumes

The thought of writing a resume intimidates almost anyone. It's difficult to know where to start or what to include. It can seem like an insurmountable task. Here are 15 tips to help you not only tackle the task, but also write a winning resume.

1. Determine your job search objective prior to writing the resume. Once you have determined your objective, you can structure the content of your resume around that objective. Think of your objective as the bulls-eye to focus your resume on hitting. If you write your resume without having a clear objective in mind, it will likely come across as unfocused to those that read it. Take the time before you start your resume to form a clear objective.

2. Think of your resume as a marketing tool. Think of yourself as a product, potential employers as your customers, and your resume as a brochure about you. Market yourself through your resume. What are your features and benefits? What makes you unique? Make sure to convey this information in your resume.

3. Use your resume to obtain an interview, not a job. You don't need to go into detail about every accomplishment. Strive to be clear and concise. The purpose of your resume is to generate enough interest in you to have an employer contact you from an interview. Use the interview to provide a more detailed explanation of your accomplishments and to land a job offer.

4. Use bulleted sentences. In the body of your resume, use bullets with short sentences rather than lengthy paragraphs. Resumes are read quickly. This bulleted sentence format makes it easier for someone to quickly scan your resume and still absorb it.

5. Use action words. Action words cause your resume to pop. To add life to your resume, use bulleted sentences that begin with action words like prepared, developed, monitored and presented.

6. Use #'s, \$'s and %'s. Numbers, dollars, and percentages stand out in the body of a resume. Use them. Here are two examples:

- Managed a department of 10 with a budget of \$1,000,000.
- Increased sales by 25% in a 15-state territory.

7. Lead with your strengths. Since resumes are typically reviewed in 30 seconds, take the time to determine which bullets more strongly support your job search objective. Put those strong points first where they are more apt to be read.

8. Play Match Game. Review want ads for positions that interest you. Use the key words listed in these ads to match them to bullets in your resume. If you have missed any key words, add them to your resume.

9. Use buzzwords. If there are terms that show your competence in a particular field, use them in your resume. For marketing people, use “competitive analysis.” For accounting types use “reconciled accounts.”

10. Accent the positive. Leave off negatives and irrelevant points. If you feel your date of graduation will subject you to age discrimination, leave the date off your resume. If you do some duties in your current job that don’t support your job search objective, leave them off your resume. Focus on the duties that do support your objective. Leave off irrelevant personal information like your height and weight.

11. Show what you know. Rather than going into depth in one area, use your resume to highlight your breadth of knowledge. Use an interview to provide more detail.

12. Show who you know. If you have reported to someone important such as a vice president or department manager, say so in your resume. Having reported to someone important causes the reader to infer that you are important.

13. Construct your resume to read easily. Leave white space. Use a font size no smaller than 10 point. Limit the length of your resume to 1-2 pages. Remember, resumes are reviewed quickly. Help the reader to scan your resume efficiently and effectively.

14. Have someone else review your resume. Since you are so close to your situation, it can be difficult for you to hit all your high points and clearly convey all your accomplishments. Have someone review your job search objective, your resume, and listings of positions that interest you. Encourage them to ask questions. Their questions can help you to discover items you inadvertently left off your resume. Revise your resume to include these items. Their questions can also point to items on your resume that are confusing to the reader. Clarify your resume based on this input.

15. Submit your resume to potential employers. Have the courage to submit your resume. Think of it as a game where your odds of winning increase with every resume you submit. You really do increase your odds with every resume you submit. Use a three-tiered approach. Apply for some jobs that appear to be beneath you. Perhaps they will turn out to be more than they appeared to be once you interview for them. Or perhaps once you have your foot in the door you can learn of other opportunities. Apply for jobs that seem to be just at your level. You will get interviews for some of those jobs. See how each job stacks up. Try for some jobs that seem like a stretch. That’s how you grow—by risks. Don’t rule yourself out. Trust the process. Good luck in your job search!