

RESUME DO'S AND DON'TS

A few tips to make sure your resume is at the top of the stack

A good resume is the essential first piece to conducting an efficient and successful job search. It is the very first impression you give of yourself and your key to getting an interview. Your resume should be concise, easy to read, and give evidence of your ability to perform the job for which you are applying. Here are a few tips to make sure your resume is at the top of the stack:

Do personalize your resume. Each position you apply for is different in some way, and the companies to which you are applying think so too. Each company uses different words to articulate their goals and work. You should use the same words to describe yourself, and what you can do for their company. Personalizing your resume is also important when you are applying for more than one kind of position, and in more than one industry. On each resume, you should emphasize the skills and accomplishments that are most essential to that job.

Do begin your resume with a Summary section. This is particularly important on technical resumes. List your technological experience and skills, including all languages, operating systems, etc. Your resume is probably being processed by an automatic scanner and placed in databases according to keywords. If it is posted online, it is also being searched for by keywords.

Do use action words and keywords. Starting your sentences with descriptive verbs is a great way to portray yourself as active, decisive, and motivated. Using keywords such as skills and technologies will help you get noticed by electronic resume screening devices used by medium to large sized companies, as well as the internet's search engines.

Do qualify and quantify your experience whenever possible by citing statistics that mark your accomplishments.

Do highlight personal qualities that are important in every job such as efficiency, manageability, and problem-solving skills.

Don't cheat yourself! In the effort to economize on space, people often leave out experience that is important and makes them uniquely qualified for the position. It is more important that an employer gets the full idea of your capabilities than it is to have a one-page resume.

Don't use personal pronouns. It is your resume, so it is implied that you are talking about yourself – I's and My's are unnecessary.

Don't be wordy. Your resume should be a concise and descriptive summary of your accomplishments. Save the description of your daily duties for the interview!

Don't misspell! Misspelling and misusing grammar is sloppy, and a fast way to land your resume in the garbage. Your computer's spell check can help, but it is crucial that you carefully proofread your resume for typos.

Don't get too fancy. A resume should be simple and well organized so that it can be looked over quickly. This means that you should use an easy to read font and print your resume using quality white or ivory paper.