Better Your Résumé

This worksheet presents introductory tips that will help you make your résumé informative, professional and effective. You can also use it as a checklist - for each pass through your résumé, focus on *one* of these points.

Vocabulary

Clarity.

Keep your language clean, concise, and to the point. Employers should be able to find your relevant skills and experience *fast*.

Be specific. Don't hide what you mean behind superfluous "professional-sounding" words or phrases. Being real and honest is more important to hirers.

Focus on *tangible outcomes*. Use numbers when you can to mark achievements and improvements.

Do.

Always use *active verbs*. Never use passive verbs. Active verbs give your résumé power and movement. **See the back of this page for skill-specific active verbs.** These active verbs should reflect your skills, and, hopefully, those that the employer desires.

Consistency.

If you hold the position right now, use the present tense when describing what you *do*. If you held the position in the past, always use the past tense when describing what you *did*.

How are you starting your descriptions? Bullet points with verbs as the first word are concise and to-the-point. Full sentences starting with "I" etc. give a more narrative flavor to your résumé. Pick either one and stick to it.

Design

Simplicity.

Remember: The goal is to design your résumé so the employer can easily find what he or she is looking for.

Stick with one font. Decide what to **bold**, what to *italicize*, and what to leave plain.

Don't get too carried away with fonts. In general, don't use more than two different ones throughout your résumé, especially when applying for a job in a "conservative" field.

Other emphasis (bold, underline, italics, caps) is useful, but combining more than one style is *DISTRACTING, UNPROFESSIONAL, AND UNNECESSARY*.

Consistency. (remember this?)

Whatever fonts and/or emphasis you use, be consistent. When you figure out the hierarchy of information (headings, subheadings, descriptions) and font for each, apply those exact styles uniformly throughout your résumé.

The same goes for format. Spacing, periods/no periods at the end of sentences, bulletpoints, alignment, dates—everything needs to show order and attention to detail.

Serif vs. Sans-serif

Serif fonts (those with stems at the ends of the strokes of the letters) keep the eye reading text. They are generally used for description.

Sans-serif (those without these stems) make the eye halt. They are generally used for headings.

More

PDF vs. Word Document

In general, PDF is better, unless specified. Why? Your format doesn't get jumbled. Compatibility issues are avoided. And don't forget all those "track changes" that need not be shown.

Active Word List

Communication Skills	Management Skills	Research Skills	Financial skills
address	assign	collect	administer
arbitrate	attain	critique	allocate
correspond	chair	define	analyze
draft	coordinate	detect	appraise
edit	delegate	diagnose	audit
lecture	direct	evaluate	balance
mediate	execute	examine	budget
motivate	organize	explore	calculate
negotiate	oversee	extract	control
persuade	plan	identify	compute
present	recommend	inspect	develop
publicize	review	interpret	forecast
reconcile	strengthen	investigate	project
speak	supervise	summarize	
write	train	survey	