

# Does Your Résumé Stand Out From the Crowd?

Job hunting is challenging these days. Employers get flooded with applications for every opening and may spend as little as ten seconds screening each résumé.

Here are some suggestions that can help your résumé stand out from the crowd and ensure that you get called in for an interview.



## Formatting Your Résumé

1. **Hit the highlights first.** *Put your most important data up on top right after your name and contact information.* A brief and compelling summary of your qualifications and skills will get the reviewer's attention and display what you can do for the company on the basis of your credentials and accomplishments.
2. **Err on the conservative side.** Take it easy on the formatting tricks. Use bold and italics sparingly so that the text is easy to read. A clean and professional appearance is usually the safest approach.
3. **Be consistent.** Make your document easy to scan. Use a consistent layout that makes your résumé easy to follow and find all the important information at a glance like company names, dates, job titles and accomplishments.
4. **Leave lots of white space.** It's good to keep your résumé to one page but even better if you do that while maintaining normal margins and 11 point fonts. Use bullets and leave some space between lines to make your résumé look more inviting.
5. **Consider a combination format.** You may hear some experts advising that you use a functional format in which you stress skills rather than your work history. Surveys show that many employers still want to see the conventional reverse chronology so try using both, in two different sections, to cover all your bases.
6. **Take the multimedia route.** *Consider supplementing your traditional paper résumé with a video or other digital content.* Give people a link to your professional website or blog or use your LinkedIn Profile.

## Writing Your Résumé

1. **Emphasize keywords.** Read the job posting carefully and integrate the keywords into your résumé. *If your résumé gets screened by an automatic tracking system, this will help it rank higher.*
2. **Customize your résumé for each opening.** These days, the competitive job market favors personalizing your résumé as much as possible. Try to adapt your language to what you know about the company's culture and the kind of candidate they're seeking, while still being authentic about your true identity.
3. **Quantify your accomplishments.** *The contribution you made in previous jobs is likely to be the most important factor in helping you get your next job.* Focus on how you improved procedures, cut costs, won awards, earned promotions or brought in new business.
4. **Use action words.** As you're describing your accomplishments, try to start each bullet with a verb. This makes you sound more dynamic and makes your résumé more interesting to read.
5. **Be concise.** Try to pack lots of information into as few words as possible. Avoid any repetition or empty jargon. Keep your sentences short.
6. **Proofread everything.** Print out a copy of your résumé to proofread. Read it backwards word by word. Give it to at least one friend or family member because a fresh pair of eyes may spot typos that have become invisible to you.

*The job market is tough, but a résumé that looks good and quickly demonstrates your strongest selling points could help you rise to the top of the stack.* Give yourself the best chance to succeed by crafting a résumé that will make your prospective employer want to learn more about you.