Resume & Cover Letter Best Practices

Your Resume Is Your Primary Marketing Tool

Your resume conveys:

▶ **Your emotional intelligence**

▶ **Your ability to concisely summarize information**

▶ **Your business writing skills**

▶ **Your attention to detail**

▶ **How seriously you take yourself and the potential job**

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The Competitive Landscape

▶ Technology and the COVID-19 pandemic have completely transformed the job-hunting landscape

▶ The good news: *You* can apply for more jobs

▶ The not-so-good news: *Everyone else* can also apply for more jobs

▶ There are more applications for an open position than a company can read. On average, every corporate job attracts 250 applications.

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Can your resume beat the Bots?

▶ **Large companies receive 50,000 – 75,000 resumes per week**

▶ **98% of large companies, and most smaller ones, use Applicant Tracking Systems (ATS) to sort, scan and rank applications**

▶ **Only 25% of job applications are actually seen by human eyes**

Which Jobs to Apply For

▶ Make sure you have the *core skills* for the jobs you are applying for

▶ Do not apply for every opening within the same company. The recruiter won't know what you are actually interested in, or if you are self-aware of your abilities.

▶ If a company has two similar roles open, apply for both.

▶ If you have a variety of skills/interests and would be happy in two very different positions, apply to both but tailor your resume for each job

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Resume Audiences

▶ **Your resume should be written with two audiences in mind:**

  ▶ The robot that pre-scans your resume

  ▶ The real-life recruiter who reads it once it makes it past the ATS

Tips for Beating the Bots

▶ Keep your resume clean and simple

▶ Avoid charts, images, logos and graphics that the ATS can't read. Also avoid columns.

▶ Avoid placing key information in headers and footers

▶ Use key words from the job descriptor at least 2 – 3 times throughout your resume

▶ Upload your resume in word format unless instructed to use PDF

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Does Your Resume Pass the 6 Second Test?

▶ **Your resume only has 6 seconds to make an impression with a prospective employer**

▶ **Make sure it is catching their attention for the right reasons**

Common Resume Mistakes

▶ **Spelling and grammatical errors**

▶ **More than one page**

▶ **Experience is not listed in chronological order**

▶ **Wrong tenses for skill verbs**

▶ **Failure to delineate skills and accomplishments vs. simply listing responsibilities**

▶ **Not customizing with key words to fit the job description**

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Tips for Passing the 6-second Test

▶ **Make it easy for the recruiter to skim your resume and see your value**

▶ **Include contact information and hyperlinks to your LinkedIn profile and portfolios of your work**

▶ **Avoid dense text and too many bullet points**

▶ **Highlight education, companies, positions and dates in bold fonts**

▶ **Use key words from the job description to amplify your hard and soft skills; Avoid buzzwords**

Additional Resume Tips

- Lead with your education

- Briefly describe companies that are not well-known

- Include your computer and technical skills

- Mention your Emma Bowen Fellowship!

- Share your resume with a friend or trusted advisor for feedback and to doublecheck for spelling and grammatical errors

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New Rules for 2023

▶ **Emphasize your remote working skills**

    ▶ **Detail how you have done your internship or other jobs remotely and the skills you acquired**

▶ **Include freelance work you have done or courses you have taken during the pandemic**

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Cover Letters

▶ **Why bother with a cover letter?**

    ▶ **More than 25% of recruiters read them**

    ▶ **They provide an opportunity to make your case for being the best candidate**

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What to Say in a Cover Letter

- ▶ **Introduce Yourself**

- ▶ **Mention the job you are applying for and how you learned about it**

- ▶ **Show that your skills and experience match those needed to do the job. Focus on 3 core competencies.**

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What to Say in a Cover Letter

- Demonstrate some knowledge about the company

- Restate your "why me" argument as it relates to the goals of the position

- Provide contact information and ask for the interview

Common Cover Letter Mistakes

▶ **Not knowing your audience**

▶ **Regurgitating your resume. A resume states what you have done. Use the cover letter to introduce your personal brand.**

▶ **Dense, cluttered text. Keep it to 3-4 brief paragraphs. No more than 150 words.**

▶ **Emphasizing how the employer can train you vs. how you can contribute to the organization**

▶ **Using the same generic letter all the time, i.e., just switching out the company name and position**

The Best Way to Ensure Your Resume is Seen by Recruiters

▶ **Submit the online Company Application Tracking Form provided by EBF**

▶ **We will reach out to EBF partner companies and advocate for your candidacy**

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