



Resume Checklist

- Express your achievements in relation to the profit or benefits you have contributed to your employer.**

Your prospective employer is interested in seeing how your achievements have affected your previous employers. It is of little interest to them that you meet your sales target or refined the internal payroll or ordering systems. What they are really after is evidence that you made a difference. Indicate how much revenue you were responsible for bringing in or how the new payroll or ordering system actually affected the operation of the company.

- Provide evidence to support your achievements.**

Resumes are full of claims about meeting sales targets, reducing error rates or increasing productivity. A prospective employer will take more notice of your resume if you can offer concrete evidence to support your achievements.

In a sales position indicate what your sales targets were, the amount by which you exceeded them and actual dollar figures. Similarly if you were in an operations role let the reader know that you were responsible for an increase on productivity of 22% over an 11 month period and that the target set by senior management was 15% over 12 months.

- Outline how you reached your achievements.**

You have now outlined your achievements in terms of the benefit to your past employers and you have provided evidence to back up your claims. The final part of outlining your achievements is to tell the reader how you reached your revenue targets or reduced safety incidents.

As a sales person did you hunt down new clients and bring in fresh business or did you manage existing customers and increase their annual spending. A prospective employer needs to feel confident not only that you can do what you say you can, but also that you are capable of doing it for them.

- Indicate your key strengths.**

The best way to start your resume is to outline your key strengths and competencies. The rest of the document should then be used to support your claims with your achievements and results. Limit your list of key strengths to what you feel are really your strongest points are and be sure you back them up with examples. It's no good saying that you are an excellent project manager if you don't mention and support an instance of having managed a project.

Relate your key strengths to your achievements.

If you state you are an excellent project manager, then your achievements and past experience mentioned in your resume should support this. In this example your resume should show you have had recent experience in managing the performance of a project team as well as the deliverables, timelines and budgets of the project.

Don't dwell on a job description – what did you actually do?

An effective resume is more than a list of your responsibilities or duties. This forms an important part of the document but a prospective employer wants to know more than that. In reality a sales position with one software company will be very similar to another within a similar software company.

You should outline briefly what your role entailed (i.e. duties and tasks performed) but you should spend more time detailing what you were accountable for, the impact your role had within the company and the other noteworthy things you achieved that aren't listed in a generic job description.

Your resume needs to be well laid out and aesthetically pleasing.

A resume is essentially a very simple document. It needs to outline the companies you have worked for, when you worked there and what the businesses do. It needs to tell the reader what you were responsible and accountable for and what you added to the business. It also needs to tell the reader how to reach you should they wish to meet you.

Ideally the format of the resume should allow the reader to move from general information (eg where you worked and when) to specific information (what you achieved and how you achieved it) easily.

Most job applications today are sent via email. For ease of use resumes should be written in Microsoft Word (or sent as a .pdf file if you use another program). The use of clip art, photos, elaborate borders and other graphic elements should be kept to a minimum. Unless you are a trained graphic designer or a gifted amateur your efforts will more than likely look amateurish and detract from the content.

Remember, at its heart the resume is a simple document, you don't need to add elaborate, distracting flourishes. When formatting your resume choose standard fonts (Arial, Verdana, Times New Roman or Garamond for example) and ensure that it is of a reasonable size. You may have 20/20 vision but the person reading your resume may not be able to read the size 9 font you have chosen.

Don't be afraid of white space either, it breaks up the flow of the document and makes it easier to read and reduces eye fatigue. It also makes the document easier to scan if the reader is looking for something specific.

Keep your language professional and accessible.

The best language to use in a resume is succinct, clear and to the point. Your resume needs to be free from jargon and sparing in its use of technical terms. The person reading your resume initially may not have as deep an understanding of the field in which you work.

A Recruitment Consultant, HR Manager or Senior Manager will more than likely read the document first and you need to ensure that they can understand what you have written.

Will the document make you stand out from a pile of others?

Your resume needs to highlight your unique blend of skills, experience, achievements and expertise and express them to the reader in a manner that makes them want to arrange an interview.

Like an article in a newspaper or magazine the first paragraphs must create the desire in the reader to continue reading. Don't waste your first impression with a cover page or your contact details and a list of hobbies. Put your basic contact details in the header or footer of each page and more details on the last page.

In the first half of the page give a career overview and some notable achievements. Once you have the reader interested they continue on and see more detail highlighting abilities, achievements and supporting evidence.

Review your completed resume – Does it achieve what you want?

A resume has one simple purpose. It needs to outline your experience, skills and employment history in such a way that the reader wants to arrange an interview with you. Your resume is basically a document selling you, your skills and experience as a unique package.

Read through your resume as a person who has never met you would. Do you sound interesting? Are your skills and experience expressed in the document? Have you given relevant examples to support your strengths and any statements you have made?