

6 Seconds To Success: A Resume Writing Guide by Elizabeth Kalakuntla, Dawson Professional Recruiter



“Most job seekers think recruiters spend 4 to 5 minutes reviewing a resume. The truth: recruiters spend about 6 seconds before they make the initial “fit/no fit” decision.”

-The Ladders-

The above statement shocks many candidates seeking employment, but the truth is, experienced Recruiters know exactly what they are looking for in that amount of time. This doesn't mean I know your entire employment history in 6 seconds, but I do decide if I will call you to follow-up on your experience. This process breaks down to eye tracking and Recruiters tend to look at specific information such as:

Name | Current Title/Company | Current Position Start and End Dates |
Previous Title/Company | Previous Position Start and End Dates |
Education

Below, I have spent time explaining resume writing mistakes that I see every day and how to make your resume more appealing to get the opportunity you want!

An Objective.

A career objective is a thing of the past. Think about it. If you are active in the job market, it is obvious that your objective is to find a new position. What should be added to the resume is a professional summary. A professional summary is a compilation of your qualifications, accomplishments and skills in a 3-5 sentence paragraph. This is your story, your personal stamp. As a Recruiter, I want this paragraph to tell me how many years of experience you have in your specific skill set. I want to know if you saved a company \$1M dollars by implementing a new software product, that your communication is strong and that you are a team player with the intent of bringing your best qualities to a prospective company. Do you have a certification that has taken your qualifications to the next level? Be proud of that and let it be known. For The Millennial Crowd: Make your professional summary as appealing as your dating app bio, just make sure it's G-Rated and worthy of 'Corporate America'. As a Recruiter, I want to swipe right.

Your Face.

When writing a professional resume, there are very few situations where a headshot is acceptable. A modeling gig? Yes. An IT gig? No. The information within the body of your resume should speak for you. A photo is distracting in this context. If you'd like to use your good looks to win the hearts of Recruiters, LinkedIn will be the answer. Upload a professional headshot that will emphasize your profile and call it a day. For The Millennial Crowd: A selfie is not the same thing as a professional headshot. If getting your photo professionally done isn't an option for you, put on a nice blazer, stand in front of a white wall and have a friend take a picture on your behalf.

Vague Dates.

One part of my job is to be able to look at your resume and know the exact length of every position you've held. I need to be able to see career stability, if you are currently employed, most recently unemployed, whatever the case may be. My preference is that dates are listed out in 'MM/DD/YY - Present' or 'MM/DD/YY - MM/DD/YY'. Having non-specific dates such as 'About A Year' or '3 Months' doesn't tell me enough to consider the resume valuable without dates that are substantial. For The Millennial Crowd: Including vague dates can be a huge red flag to a Recruiter because it may raise questions of authenticity. Finding an entry-level position is hard enough, don't put another target on your back by not taking the time to enter this valuable information for each position you've worked.

I. Me. My.

The three pronouns that dance around the pages of so many resumes that come across my desk. A resume should be written in a telegraphic way, omitting personal pronouns. For Example: "I developed a program that saved the company \$2M in expenses" should be changed to 'Developed a program that saved the company \$2M in expenses'. For The Millennial Crowd: The art of resume writing doesn't happen in one day, but research definitely helps. Check

out examples online of telegraphic writing and see how you can enhance your resume by incorporating tips and tricks from professional recruiting websites.

Wrong Tenses. Non-Action Words.

This has to be one of my biggest pet peeves of any resume I consider. The tense of the initial action word of each bullet is so important. Also, the action itself needs to be exactly what it's called, an ACTION. I'm going to put my nerd badge on for a second and tell you how excited it makes me when I read through a resume with perfect tenses and action words that grab my attention and are well-thought out. Many times I see 'Responsible for developing, implementing and communicating IT policies.' Can you responsible? No. How would I change it? 'Assumed responsibility for developing, implementing and communicating IT policies.' Or, another option would be 'Developed, implemented and communicated IT policies.' (past tense) or 'Develop, implement and communicate IT policies.' (present tense). For The Millennial Crowd: Check out sites online that offer a variety of action words if you're finding yourself hitting a wall. <http://career.opcd.wfu.edu/files/2011/05/Action-Verbs-for-Resumes.pdf>

Hobbies.

Oh, the infamous hobbies section of the resume. I'm not sure when this phenomenon started, but we have to shut it down. The hobbies are usually listed at the bottom of the resume, right before the 'References Available Upon Request' note (another no-no). Don't get me wrong, if you're my candidate, I would love to know what interests you have outside of the office. I think it's great to learn of candidates that compete in triathlons or teach an art class in their spare time, but a resume is not the place for a hobbies section. Keep those fun facts for future conversations. For The Millennial Crowd: Hobby: Noun, 'An activity done regularly in one's leisure time for pleasure.' Shocker, social media doesn't count. When a Recruiter asks you about your interests, answering with 'working out' or 'travelling' is better than nothing.

Irrelevant Experience.

When I was 16, I worked at an ice cream shop in my hometown of Archbold, Ohio. Shout out to #HomesteadIceCream! If you're ever in the area, stop by! Park on the side of the country road, catch fireflies and chat with local families while you wait your turn. On a weekend, the line will be out the door! BUT, back to my point. *sigh* Always keep the experience on your resume relevant. Understandably, everyone has had 'odd jobs' before landing into a career, but no one cares what I did 15+ years ago. For The Millennial Crowd: you are a fresh high school or college graduate without corporate experience, use internships and summer jobs to show professional experience. You have to start somewhere.

Side Note: *This information is based purely on first-hand experience. All sources that I have used will be noted throughout the article. Thank you for reading!*

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