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Center for Career Development

An Open Letter about Resumes
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Since beginning my role at Franklin University in July, the most asked question? “What do you think about my resume?” And at the core, it is not what I think about your resume but is your resume serving you well in the advancement of your career or your strategic job search?

A resume is a summary of your work history, skills, and education. A resume should be crafted and edited for each specific position for which you apply, and it should be just one or two pages long.

News flash, your resume really isn't about you. Your resume is about how you can fulfill the needs of the employer, easing their pain.

You have about 6 seconds to attract the attention of the hiring manager. That makes the top 1/3 of your resume the most valuable real estate you have in your job search.

Carefully consider what you place on that valuable piece of real estate.

1. Your name and contact information
2. A summary statement matching your knowledge, skills and abilities to the key words in the position description, headed by the title of the position for which you are applying.

Just the Basics:

1. You must tailor your resume.
2. I have reviewed a number of resumes from job seekers who send out the same exact resume for multiple jobs. The resume has not been crafted for the position or to address the employer's pain point.
3. Each resume should be tailored to the job and type of position that you're applying for. You don't have to change everything, but you do want the resume to illustrate how your knowledge, skills and abilities align with the employer's need and the position description.
4. Your contact information
5. Yes, I have seen resumes without contact information or with the wrong contact information. All that is required is your name, your professional email address and phone number. Consider creating an email address that is professional, containing your name in some way for your strategic job search. I would encourage you to also include your LinkedIn or website if you have a portfolio of work.
6. Age and gender have no place on your resume.

7. Use action verbs, use success verbs.
8. Your resume is you marketing you! Use action verbs and success words. Your choice of words matter. Expressions like “results-oriented,” “team player,” “excellent communication skills” or “hard worker,” “lack the metric to make it meaningful.

Responsibilities tell, Accomplishments sell. The action or success verb is not enough you must quantify your accomplishment.

Here are a few examples of action/success verbs that demonstrate certain qualities and skills:

Achieved	Decreased	Gained	Led	Produced
Added	Delivered	Generated	Maximized	Reduced
Awarded	Directed	Grew	Minimized	Saved
Built	Designed	Improved	Monitored	Sold
Changed	Detected	Increased	Optimized	Streamlined
Collaborated	Eliminated	Installed	Organized	Transformed
Contributed	Exceeded	Introduced	Prepared	
Coordinated	Expanded	Launched	Presented	

Quantify it, give the metric; increase in sales #, money saved, etc.

Your resume is you on paper or in the digital realm.

It needs to be readable, scan able and easy to follow. Hiring managers review hundreds of resumes. Their time is valuable. They will not dig deep to find how you might be right for the job.

Remember, it is your job to market you.

1. Make sure that you are consistent in format, content and font. Formatting that wastes space and confuses the eye. My colleague, Tim Goetz was reviewing a resume recently and said, “I have no idea where to look. My eye is being led nowhere.”
2. Will your format translate to a PDF?
3. Our eyes like white space, it makes it more readable.
4. Use consistent spacing, underlining, italics, bold and capitalization for emphasis
5. Use headings effectively for importance.
6. Hard to take, but one page is best. Two pages if you are mid to late career.
7. Please proofread and have someone else proofread it.
8. Narrative style is best. Do not use personal pronouns.
9. Careful with color, especially too much color. Unless you are in a creative field such as design which welcomes this.
10. Beware of weird fonts. Consider using fonts that are readable and clear such as Calibri, Cambria, Garamond, Georgia, Helvetica, Arial, Book Antiqua, Trebuchet MS, Bell MT,

Bodoni MT, Bookman Old Style, Goudy Old Style and Century Gothic, Gill Sans MT, Lucida Sans, Tahoma, Verdana

11. Your resume is your digital marketing tool; by describing – however briefly – what your employer does, you switch your marketing focus from where it ought to be – on YOU – to your employer.
12. Your photo. Nope, it might be cute, trendy and digital but it does not belong on your resume.
13. Hobbies, this is your professional resume. Unless your hobby is a business, it does not have a place on your resume. And even if it is a business, it might not belong on your resume.
14. A career history older than 15 years, 10 years may be enough.
15. Your references: in fact do not include “references available upon request”, that is already know. Provide these when requested later in the process.

I know that this sounds complicate and cumbersome. Once you have identified a template you like, and see how your knowledge, skills and abilities led to that next position, you will be able to craft each resume and cover letter for the position you are applying to.

The team in the Center for Career Development is available to assist you with your resume, cover letters, job search strategy, interview skills and post-interview. To submit your resume for review – please email your resume, a little about what you’re looking for, and some of the challenges you’ve faced to resumereview@franklin.edu

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