

Creating an effective resume is all about writing with the reader's perspective in mind. Of course, you want to emphasize your strongest skills and attributes, and show why you are an excellent candidate, but if you do not do it in a way that catches the eye of the HR professional who reads it then you will not be successful.

Think about this common scenario: a recruiter has a pile of two hundred resumes on their desk and is faced with the task of screening them to pick out the top four or five for the interview phase of hiring. How are you going to make sure your resume stands out from the rest and gives the HR professional the information they want and need?

Make their job easier

If you want your resume to be noticed, make it easy for the screener to read it. This means:

- Wide margins - White space is a good thing on a resume because it keeps the material from looking cramped and crowded
- Easy to read font style - Script, calligraphy, and other non-standard fonts are difficult to read. Stick with a basic font that is clean and clear.
- Font size - The font size should be 11 point; any smaller and the print becomes extremely difficult to read and makes the page look crowded.
- Highlight key information - Your resume should highlight the key information that matches up with the qualifications and requirements of the job posting. These are the elements a screener will be looking for, so make them readily apparent with just a quick scan through.
- Plain paper - Some people like to be trendy and put their resume on paper with a unique color or texture, but this is not what a HR professional cares about. Stick with a good quality white paper that makes the printing really stand out and be noticed.

Give them content

A HR professional will look for strong content that relates to the needs of the specific job opening, so use active statements that are very specific to describe your skills and attributes. Include actions and results that are measurable and quantifiable.

Strong content does not mean fluff. Avoid complex, flowery statements like:

"Bottom-line, results-oriented professional with a positive attitude and ability to motivate teams of all shapes, sizes and experience levels"

This will turn off a screener faster than you can possibly imagine. Statements like the one above do not really say anything about you or what you offer to a potential employer; rather, they sound like an attempt to pad your resume with words that sound good because you do not have any solid experience or qualifications to highlight.

Give them the truth

Another common thing that HR professionals hate is statements that embellish, exaggerate or outright lie about your skills and attributes. They have seen it all and experienced screeners are adept at picking out things that are not always what they seem to be.

For example, do not try to pass off a lower level job as something with more responsibility by giving it a fancy title. If you were a cashier, do not say you were a "money handling specialist"; if you were a team leader, do not say you were an "assistant manager in training via team project coordination". HR professionals are not fooled by titles and phrases such as this, and often view them as a negative thing. After all, if you try to exaggerate the information in your resume, what else will you exaggerate during the interview or during employment?

When in doubt, use simple, clear language that is truthful. A HR professional will recognize this and give you credit for being forthright and concise.