

While there are no set formats for writing an effective resume, there are some fundamental rules to remember when putting together this important document. Its purpose is to represent you and communicate your skills and attributes to a potential employer, so it is in your best interest to do everything in your power to make it as effective as possible.

Be specific

The first fundamental rule is to be specific. This means putting information into your resume that is measurable and verifiable, using statements that describe an action you took and the results that it generated. It is not enough to describe the characteristics of your actions, or what others thought of your actions; instead, use numbers and quantitative statements to clearly demonstrate the results you obtained.

Be concise

The second fundamental rule is to be concise. For some people this seems in direct conflict with the first rule, because they think it takes lots of words to provide the specific information that should be included in a resume. And in all likelihood, your first draft will be wordy and longer than the ending draft. That is okay, though, because it is better to get all of your thoughts down in writing, and then edit and polish from there.

Be honest

The third fundamental rule is to be honest. One of the most common mistakes made by job seekers is to exaggerate, embellish, fabricate or tell an outright lie on their resumes. It may seem innocent enough when it is written, but anything that is not 100% truthful and factual will, when included in a resume, eventually be found out and cause consequences both personal and professional.

Be thorough

The fourth fundamental rule is to be thorough. This means taking a detailed approach to writing and editing your resume so that there are no spelling errors, no grammatical errors, and no layout or printing errors. It is easy to miss spelling errors, even when you use spell checking software, so always have someone you trust read through your resume to check for errors.

Another really good way to proofread and catch errors that would otherwise be missed is to read your resume backwards. Start with the last word, and read each word one at a time from the end to the beginning. This is a standard practice used by professional proofreaders to prevent the brain from playing tricks and allow the reader to see what is actually written on the page.

Summary

When you sit down to write your resume, remember that no matter what format or style you choose, there are some fundamental rules that you should follow to ensure that your resume is as effective as possible. If you pay attention to the basics outlined above, you will be well on your way to creating an effective resume.