

Just as it is when you meet someone for the first time, your resume only has one chance to make a good first impression. Make the most of this opportunity by creating your resume to have the maximum impact in the short amount of time that most HR professionals have to screen the documents they receive.

Length - Your resume should be no longer than two pages, and less if it is possible to do so without crowding the information or using extremely small type size.

Format - Choose the resume format that best communicates your particular strengths. Determine whether you are best served with a chronological, functional, or combination format.

Content - The content of your resume should be specific and tailored to the needs of the job position. Highlight those aspects of your skills and qualifications that match up will with the requirements of the job.

Layout - The layout should be pleasing to the eye, not crowded or busy. Use clear, simple headings that draw the reader's eye to each section and put information in the most logical order for the job position you are seeking. Use white space to your advantage by keeping your margins wide and allowing enough space between topics and statements.

Overall look and feel - Think about how your resume looks and feels to the reader. Is the paper sturdy and high quality, or is it thin and floppy? Is the printing clear and sharp or is it faded and inconsistent? Is the paper plain enough so that the content is the main focus or is it a trendy color that distracts the reader's attention from the content?

Once you have your resume put together in a way that you think looks good, test it out by sharing it with a trusted friend or knowledgeable peers. Ask them for their honest feedback and input about what kind of a first impression the document makes and any improvements you could make. Visit a local job agency or recruiter and ask for their feedback, as they are accustomed to seeing all kinds of resumes and could likely give you excellent suggestions for making your resume stand out.

Another option is to consult with a professional resume writer. A person such as this has special expertise in making a resume as strong as possible, and you will likely find that it is well worth the cost of getting an objective, professional opinion. The cost of these services will vary depending on whether you are looking strictly for proofreading and layout help, or if you are looking for help with content development as well.