

How to Write a Resume

By Bill Quackenbush, CPC, CTS
President, QCI Technical Staffing

Whether or not you are looking for a job, it's good idea to keep your resume updated. It can be overwhelming to try to revamp your resume when there is an opportunity knocking. In an effort to respond to an ad on a job board, some people rush, and don't give their resume the careful consideration it deserves.

Thousands of resumes have crossed my desk over my professional career so I believe I can tell you what will make your resume stand out. Unless you want your resume to get overlooked and lost in cyberspace, consider the following:

- **Use bullets rather than long paragraphs.** Using bullets shows that you are a good communicator. Information presented in bullets is easier to read and you are less likely to make grammar mistakes in shorter phrases.
- **List your accomplishments rather than your duties.** Some duties must be listed but concentrate on accomplishments. Again, use bullets, and focus on your specific successes (e.g., reduced cost by a certain \$ amount or %, or improved productivity by X%). These days, companies are looking to hire someone who can solve a problem, fix a situation, or improve the bottom line. They know you will be working, but they want to know what you will accomplish – so tell them *what you have accomplished in the past*.
- **Do not list an objective.** That is my professional opinion but not everyone agrees. Objectives will be used against you if they do not match the position exactly. Also, you might be considered again in the future for a different position and the objective is the first thing they see on a resume. Instead, use some kind of summary of your experience or accomplishments at the beginning.
- **How long can a resume be?** In the old days you were told to restrict your resume to one page, and then it was two. With the advent of the internet, there is no hard fast limit, but I would recommend 2-3 pages. A two-page resume might come out as 2.5 pages on some printers anyway, so a hard limit of two pages can not be followed.
- **Will a long resume help me?** Not necessarily. I actually think a long resume can hurt you. If you are having problems with length, trim off the objective, summary,

references and personal information. You can also provide more information about recent positions and those relevant to the position you are interested in, and less information on older or less relevant positions. Do not even put “*Previous positions available upon request*” as they know this.

- **Use a Chronological resume rather than a Functional resume.** Every recruiter I have ever met prefers them and so do all my clients. The only time I would ever recommend a Functional resume is when a large career change is involved. Even then, I would suggest including the Chronological information at the end of the resume. If you are worried about age bias remember that first of all it is illegal and companies know that, and second of all if you do not include dates they will probably assume you are older than you really are.
- **Be conservative with your fonts and layout.** Also, don't adjust the margins to fit more information on fewer pages. Your recipient may have trouble printing it.
- **PLEASE, spell check and grammar check your resume!** I can *not* believe the number of resumes I receive with misspelled words on them – true example for a candidate's current position - “*Platn Manager.*” I even get resumes with the wrong phone number on them. Run your spell checker, print a hard copy and read it carefully for words your spell checker will miss and even have someone else proof it for you.

Your resume is your first impression. You probably know the saying, “You do not get a second chance to make a first impression” so make sure you are ready when opportunity knocks. Make sure it is a good first impression.