

RESUME BEST PRACTICES

One of your first steps to getting a job is by letting employers know who you are and what you can do. Another way of saying that is listing your skills in a formal manner known as a skills style resume. A Skill Style Resume will help you to highlight the things you can do rather than periods of time. This style of resume can help you because you may have some breaks in your employment because of your incarceration.

A good resume is an important job search tool that “sells” your employment skills to a prospective employer. Here are some things you should know about good resume content and preparation.

1. **Big, hard to pronounce words are not popular anymore.** So, write the resume like you are telling someone about your skills and experience, just make sure to ask someone to help you with the grammar. Short and simple resumes are in style, but proper spelling and punctuation are always important. This simple detail can make or break your chances of getting a job.
2. **One page is the desired length.** This is going to work to your advantage because you may have been out of work for quite some time.
3. **A skill-specific resume will help you focus on your experience in one skill.**
4. **Be prepared to write one resume for each skill you have.** This is not as difficult as it may sound. Remember that your name and contact information will be the same.
5. **If you take the time to customize your resume for each job application it will enhance your chances of standing out above other applicants.** This shows the employer that you took the time to tailor your resume to their specific job opening.
6. **If the job announcement listed duties and responsibilities, you should list some of your experience that mirrors those listed duties.**
7. **Do not list references, but have a prepared list of references with contact information available if you are asked to provide them.**
8. **Try to use a computer.** There are computer programs that make it easier to prepare your résumé. Your local library, workforce center, or “quick print” shop can help. Practice on the computer in the library.
9. **Be specific.** Don’t waste valuable space with overused, general statements. An example of a general or “flowery” statement is: “A challenging position enabling me to contribute to organizational goals while offering an opportunity for growth and advancement.” Be direct and to the point in identifying your accomplishments.
10. **Avoid Use of Personal Pronouns.** There should be no mention of “I” or “me” and only limited use of articles such as, “a,” “an,” and “the.” Also, do not use abbreviations.
11. **List only necessary information.** Do not include your interests unless they are related to the job. For example, if applying for a position as a ski instructor, list cross-country skiing as a hobby. Personal information such as date of birth, marital status, height and weight, and salary or wages should not be on the résumé.
12. **Center or align headings.** All headings should be easy to locate and consistent in layout.
13. **Check for typos.** Check for typos, grammatical errors, and coffee stains. Use the spell check feature on the computer and ask one or two friends to review the résumé to find mistakes you might have overlooked.
14. **Use quality copy paper.** Don’t try to save money by printing your résumé on cheap copy paper instead of good quality stock. A résumé should be printed on paper with a high percentage of cotton fiber; it should also be mailed in an envelope with a high percentage of cotton fiber. You can find résumé paper and envelopes at any store that sells office supplies. Inspect copies for smudges and marks before distributing.