

TOP RESUME FAQs



Our expert solves your challenging
resume dilemmas.

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Special thanks to [Karen Hofferber](#), author of this report and senior resume writer for [ResumePower.com](#). Karen's brilliant resume writing strategies have brought success to her clients for more than seven years.

Interested in custom resume services? Contact the experts at [ResumePower.com](#). You may call us at 800-203-0551 (toll-free) or 215-794-9527 (worldwide), or send an email to Info@ResumePower.com.

Feel free to pass this Special Report along to your friends, family, or colleagues. Many thanks for downloading this report!

FAQ #1: How can I keep my resume concise?



Q: I have 20 years of experience and I am having a tough time getting my resume down to one page. How do I achieve this?

A: The old one-page resume “rule” has gone by the wayside, and this is especially true for professionals with more than five years of experience. Unless you are a recent graduate or you are making a major career change and have little relevant experience, you will probably need a two- or three-page resume to adequately highlight your credentials, career history, and achievement track record.

If you cut your resume to one page, you won’t have room for much more than a simple work history description. Today’s resumes must communicate a track record of achievement, showing not only what you have done, but also how well you have done it. This means that you should provide ample evidence of your accomplishments, especially for your most recent positions (within the past ten years or so). A one-page resume is seldom able to achieve this effectively.

Succinct writing is important, so your resume should be both compelling and concise. If your current resume is spilling onto a third page by only a few lines, do some judicious editing to fit it on two pages.

FAQ #2: How do I work with recruiters?



Q: I've never used a recruiter before. Can you offer insider tips on how to best work with them?

A: Keep in mind that employers either retain or pay recruiters on a contingency basis to find optimal matches for job openings. In other words, they work for the employer, not for you. It is not their job to find you work. Luck and timing play a key part in meeting the needs of recruiters for openings they are trying to fill, so get your resume into the hands of as many recruiters as possible. You'll be missing out on opportunities if you send your resume to only one recruiter and wait for the phone to ring.

Recruiters are an exception to the rule when it comes to the length of your resume. It is common for a recruiter to request a condensed, one-page resume during the initial screening phase, so it's a good idea to have this document ready so you won't be caught off-guard if you receive such a request. Savvy jobseekers prepare two different versions of their resumes – a brief “recruiter” version that summarizes career highlights, and a longer, more detailed resume for employers.

Because recruiters tend to be very busy and inundated with resumes, it's best to keep follow-up brief. (Most recruiters prefer email for follow-up communications.)

It's a mistake to tip your hand in terms of mentioning salary requirements when initially contacting an employer, but this information should be shared when communicating with a recruiter. A good strategy is to provide a salary range in your cover letter. For example, “My salary requirements are in the \$50K to \$75K range, with room for negotiation depending on the scope of job responsibilities.”

FAQ #3: How many achievements should I list?



Q: How many bulleted achievements should I include for each position held during my career?

A: Unless your older experience is more relevant to your current job target than your most recent experience, provide the most amount of detail on work you have done within the past ten to fifteen years. Keep in mind that employers are most interested in what you did recently.

After a brief description of your scope of responsibilities for each position held, follow this with a bulleted list of “Selected Achievements” or “Key Results.” For your most recent experience, anywhere between six and eight bulleted achievements is a good number. Earlier experience should be summarized more succinctly, with only the most stand-out accomplishments mentioned.

FAQ #4: How can I avoid age discrimination?



Q: I'm approaching 60 and I am concerned about age discrimination. How can I downplay my age on my resume?

A: If you're concerned about the possibility of your age working against you, there are several strategies you can use to downplay your chronological age. For example, you can group your employment that pre-dates the 1980s into an "Early Career" section, summarizing employer names and job titles held and omitting employment dates. You could also simply write a brief statement at the end of your professional experience section alluding to earlier experience and providing only an end-date vs. a starting and ending date. (For example, "Excelled in early career for ABC, Inc., progressing through fast-track promotions to reach level as assistant plant manager in 1981.")

You can also leave off your years of graduation for any degrees held.

However, these strategies are not foolproof, and savvy HR professionals and hiring managers may recognize these omissions for exactly what they are – an attempt to mask chronological age. This can work against you, and some employers may guess your age to be older than you actually are if you leave off dates. So weigh the pros and cons carefully and proceed with caution if you decide to use this strategy.

In addition, be sure to remove information from your resume that has the potential to "date" you. Obsolete technology (e.g., "Wang") would be one example of this.

Keep in mind that as a mature worker, you have a lot to offer. You can "sell" your years of experience, dedicated work ethic, and industry expertise as a benefit to potential employers.

FAQ #5: How do I write a career change resume?



Q: How do I write my resume to achieve a career or industry change?

A: Your new industry or career target and your relevant qualifications should be clearly communicated early in your resume. One of the best ways to do this is to write a powerful “qualifications summary” paragraph at the beginning of your resume. In this section, articulate your goal and transferable skills/experience that relate to this goal. Here’s an example opening sentence:

Fortune 500-experienced sales and marketing executive seeking to leverage proven leadership, financial acumen, and a consistent record of delivering breakthrough results to transition into an operations role.

Then, for each of your bulleted accomplishments in your Professional Experience section, select achievements that are relevant to what you now want to do. Bring out projects, initiatives, or teams you led or participated on that have a direct correlation to the kind of work you will be doing in your new career/industry. Use your resume to convince employers that you are well equipped to be successful in this new venture.

FAQ #6: How can I hide employment gaps?



Q: I have a long employment gap. How do I address this on my resume?

A: Millions of people leave the workplace each year to raise their children, care for ill or aging family members, return to school, recover from an illness or accident, deal with a layoff, or for a myriad of other reasons. So the good news is that there is less of a stigma attached to this than there used to be. It's possible that you may not need to address the gap. For example, if the gap in employment started in February 2005 and ended in October 2006 (a 20-month gap), you can successfully bypass the gap in your resume by listing only your years of employment (vs. months and years). This would mean that your end-date for your previous employer would be 2005, and the start date for your current employer would be 2006 – which does not expose a gap.

But if the gap spans multiple years, and especially if the gap has occurred within the last five years, then it will need to be addressed in either the resume or the cover letter.

Serving as the primary caregiver for a family member or taking a “sabbatical” to pursue an advanced degree are certainly valid explanations for a gap. You can also fill this time period by showcasing any volunteerism, consulting, or self-directed study you completed. Treat this experience just as you would a paid, full-time position, and try to include a few examples of key contributions you made.

FAQ #7: How should I handle a lack of a degree?



Q: I have extensive experience in my field, but I didn't finish my degree. How do I get around this when responding to job ads that list a minimum of a bachelor's degree among their requirements?

A: Employers are often willing to overlook the absence of a degree if a candidate has extensive experience and a proven track record of success. So your resume needs to do precisely that – demonstrate your history of proven performance. It will be especially important for you to include quantifiable examples (using numbers, percentages, dollar amounts, and before/after comparisons) of how you have improved operations, profits, team performance, customer service, market share, etc.

If you attended college but didn't graduate, mention studies that you did complete. This is an excellent way to add keywords to your resume that would otherwise be missing – without being misleading or untruthful. Here's an example:

UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA – Tuscaloosa, AL

Coursework toward a BA in Advertising, 1985 to 1987

Completed over half of degree program requirements prior to being recruited by XYZ Company to join their account executive team.

Job seekers without a college degree should also include highlights of any professional development completed over the course of their careers to show a commitment to lifelong learning. This, too, can help to maximize your resume's keyword density. Here's an example:

Professional Development: Completed numerous seminars and courses throughout career on topics including:

- Leadership & Supervision
- Regulatory Affairs
- Six Sigma Principles
- Performance Management
- Finance for Managers
- Strategic Business Plans
- Employee Retention
- Balanced Scorecards
- HR Generalist Affairs

FAQ #8: How should I handle self-employment?



Q: For the past few years I've been self-employed as a consultant. I'm concerned that employers might assume that I'm a job-hopper due to the short-term nature of my consulting work. I'm also struggling to come up with quantified achievements for my consulting work, since I've usually moved on to the next assignment before I know the outcome of my efforts. How do I overcome these challenges?

A: Group all of your consulting work under one heading to avoid looking like a job-hopper. Write a brief description outlining your specialties and the types of projects you have participated in. Follow with bulleted list of "Project Highlights."

You can start each bullet with the name of the client (or, if your nondisclosure agreement prevents you from using actual client names, try writing a description of their respective industries). Follow with a brief explanation of the consulting project and the results for each client (if known). If you don't know the ultimate results or impacts of your consulting efforts, mention the *anticipated* outcomes and client benefits in your resume. Here's an example:

Technology Consultant, 2004 to Present

Built consulting practice specializing in networking and web-based solutions for diverse-industry companies. Cultivated a loyal client following due to quality and expediency of work. **Project Highlights:**

- *Mid-Size Regional Retailer (two-month project):* Led overhaul of company website to equip client with a cutting-edge internet presence and eCommerce capabilities (anticipated to increase total annual revenues by a minimum of 30% within first year of launch).
- *Startup Temp Agency (one-month project):* Architected network infrastructure, creating a wireless local area network (WLAN) and virtual private network (VPN) with fail-safe system security and multimedia capabilities to support on-site and remote users.
- *Small to Mid-Size Manufacturers/Retailers (ongoing):* Retained by numerous clients to tune and optimize systems and networks. Troubleshot complex issues, resolving network crashes, system slowdowns, and security vulnerabilities.



Letter from Kim Isaacs, ResumePower.com Director

Contact Information:

Toll-free Phone: (800) 203-0551 • Worldwide: (215) 794-9527

Web: <http://www.resumepower.com> • Execs: <http://www.execresumes.com>

Email: kim@resumepower.com • Blog: <http://www.resumepower.com/blog>

Dear Friend,

I hope that you found this special report useful. Resume writing can be very confusing, especially when the experts disagree. The best strategy is to listen to the experts, incorporate resume changes that make sense for your situation, and test-drive the resume to make sure it works.

You can read more articles on resumes and job searching on our website:

<http://www.resumepower.com/articles.html>.

If you have topics you would like covered in future reports, feel free to email me at kim@resumepower.com.

You can also visit my blog to stay updated on resume writing trends:

<http://www.resumepower.com/blog>.

Thank you for downloading this special report, and please drop me a line to let me know how your job search is going.

To your success,

Kim Isaacs

Director, ResumePower.com