

Your Résumé Checklist

CONTENT

1. Target content toward position of interest

Is the résumé content marketing you and slanted toward the position?
Does it focus on appropriate skills / accomplishments using key words?
Did you quantify your accomplishments – use numbers, percentages?

2. Visibility of key information (judgment is made within seconds)

Are your qualifying skills immediately visible on top ½ of the page?
Did you organize selling points and get straight to the point?
Did you include relevant membership, internship, volunteerism, skills, etc?

3. Accomplishments optimized / prominently highlighted?

Achievements should be obvious and focused – bulleted or highlighted.
Focus on achievements / accomplishments, rather than job duties.

4. Relevance of information presented

Is the information relevant to the job and include terminology of the industry?

5. Keywords

Are keywords in the job description incorporated in your résumé?

6. Order of categories (Education, Experience, etc.)

Is data presented in an order that best serves presents and markets you?

7. Effectiveness of writing and word selection

Are sentences or bulleted items well-written with action-verbs?
Do your words / phrases accurately and strategically reflect your skills?
Did you avoid verbosity and word duplication? Are you succinct and to the point?

APPEARANCE / STYLE

8. Design elements / format

Does your résumé have “style” which sets it apart from others?
Can the recruiter quickly locate the information s/ he seeks?
Did you create a tailored résumé and avoid using a template?

8b. Masthead

Did you create a masthead with simple, professional design elements?
Is the masthead visually appealing with your name as the largest font?
Does your masthead include: name, address, city state, zip, phone and email?
Did you include area code and phone number?
Is your ring-back tone and voice mail message professionally appropriate?
Did you remove the email underline (hyperlink) and is your email address appropriate?

9. Balanced / consistent margins (on all 4 sides?)

10. Quality paper and printing

If you used white paper, did you use 24 lb bond 100% cotton paper?

11. Colons

Remove colons after headings. Bold, capitalize or underline headings.

CONSISTENCY

12. Formatting enhancements

Are your line spacings, tabs, and font sizes consistent?
If one section title is bold are all section titles bold?
Did you type your masthead on résumé, cover letter and reference page?

13. Number style

Is the style you selected to display numbers consistent?

14. Punctuation

Is it consistent? If one bulleted item ends with a period, do all bulleted items?

15. Tenses (past / present)

Are current job descriptions in present tense -- past jobs in past tense?
Do bulleted accomplishments imply first person, rather than third person, i.e. manage vs. manages?

16. Consistent and limited abbreviations

Did you limit or omit use of abbreviations?
If a state is spelled out /abbreviated in your address, is it spelled out/abbreviated throughout?

WRITING STYLE

17. Active verbs

Did you begin sentences / bullets with action verbs?
Did you avoid weak openings such as “Responsible for” or “Duties included”?

18. Telegraphic writing style

Did you avoid using “I” in your résumé?
Did you use telegraphic résumé writing style with minimal articles (“an, a, and, the”)

19. Smooth flow

Do your job accomplishments (bullets) flow smoothly, rather than sound choppy?

20. Conciseness

Did you avoid rambling or unnecessarily long sentences?
Are your sentences relevant, targeted, and concise without needless words?
If your résumé is 2 pages, is the second page substantial, meaningful, and necessary?
If 2 pages, the masthead of page 2 should display your name and page number.

21. Clarity

Is your writing muddled or unclear? Is your word choice professional?
Do all your bulleted items begin with parallel sentence structure, i.e.

Accelerated sales by 20 % ...

Successfully managed the office ...

Organized files ...

Creatively organized files

Orchestrated sales event ...

Individually orchestrated sales event

Captured \$1M in cost reductions ...

Cooperatively authored NIH grant ...

GRAMMAR, PUNCTUATION & SYNTAX

22. Punctuation

Did you leave blank spaces between backslashes (**yes / no**) _____

If you used bullets, is the spacing between bullets and text the same?

Did you use 1-3 bullet styles? (Too many styles distract readers from content)

If you used 1-3 bullet styles, are they in the same family of style? (Boxes:)

23. Spelling

Did you use spellcheck AND have someone proof your résumé? _____

24. Plural of “years”

12 years’ experience or 12 years of experience is correct, not 12 years experience _____

25. Capitalization

Job titles are capitalized in conjunction with a name; in sentences “Promoted to sales manager” is correct, without capitalization. _____

26. Parallel sentence structure

Did you consistently use parallel sentence structure? _____

(ExcitING and challengING rather than ExcitING and a challengE)

SCANNABILITY

27. Font selection / size

Is your font size 9.5-12 point font for text; 12-14 point font for titles? _____

Use *sans serif* fonts: Times New Roman, Garamond, Verdana, Arial, Tahoma, Gill Sans, etc.

28. Paper color

Light-colored résumé paper is a good choice; avoid white printer paper _____

29. Eliminate unscannable formatting enhancements

For scanning systems, avoid italics, underlining, columns, script, and graphics. _____

Bold and capitalizations are formatting enhancements read by scanning systems.

30. Keywords

If the résumé DOES NOT have a qualifications summary, branding statement, profile, tag lines, or headline at the top, a scannable resume could include a keyword summary, depending upon how the résumé is crafted. _____

E-MAIL

31. In body of e-mail or attached

Did you cut / paste your résumé into the e-mail body or attach it? _____

If it was attached, did you actually attach it? (in Word, Text, or PDF?)

If in an email body, did you present critical data in the top third of the email?

32. Eliminate formatting enhancements

Be careful with italics, underlining, columns, script type, and graphics which are not necessarily read by all systems similarly. Bold and caps are read by most systems. _____

MISCELLANEOUS

42. Accent marks

Do not title your résumé, “Résumé”, your name serves as your title.

When you refer to your résumé in your cover letter, use accent marks in the word, résumé.

43. Completeness

Have you addressed all key points – omitted out anything critical?

44. Ampersands (&)

Did you limit ampersands?

Ampersands are ok in company names, titles, and headings; limit them in written portion of text unless there is a good reason to include them (i.e., P&L).

45. Reference page

Did you create a separate reference page with your masthead on top?

Did you divide references into categories, i.e., Professional, Academic, Personal?

Did you contact your references in advance and ask permission to use them?

Did you include their name, title, company, address, city, state, zip, phone and email?

BOTTOM LINE

46. Résumé overall effectiveness

Does your format strategy (chronological, functional or combination) work?

Were any critical errors made on the résumé that would make it unacceptable?

Did you check for grammar or spelling errors, consistency, thoroughness and style?

47. Mailing

Did you use a legal or large envelop to limit fold lines?

Do NOT staple your cover letter to a résumé; it's a cover letter, not attachment letter.

48. Titles / Categories

Did you use titles for each section that “market” you?

QUALIFICATIONS HIGHLIGHTS ... Career Summary, Professional Profile, Career Overview

EDUCATION ... Academic History, Academic Profile, Educational Credentials, Academic Accomplishments

WORK EXPERIENCE Professional Experience, Professional Profile, Career History, or Marketing Experience

HONORS & AWARDS ... Recognition of Excellence, Academic Awards, Commendations

49. Would you hire you?

Do your résumé and cover letter address the needs of the employer for the position?

50. Is this the best marketing collateral you have ever created?

Did you take time to create a strategic résumé that strongly markets your skills?

Are you incredibly proud of your résumé?
