

How to Write a Knock-'Em Dead Resume

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Writing your resume should be the easiest part of your job endeavors. Follow these quick and easy steps to a perfect resume.

Your resume is not intended to list every task you've ever performed; it's not a job description. It's a sales and marketing tool, intended to quickly give readers an honest sense of your skills, where you've been and where you're going. If it gets your phone to ring, it has done its job.

So when making your pitch, remember – less is more. Here are a few ways you can help yourself decide what's important to include for maximum impact:

1. Carefully chose action words that convey clarity, focus and enthusiasm. If you're lucky, your resume will get about 10 seconds of attention from your prospective boss. Direct these eyeballs carefully:

Look beyond the usual for the strongest and most accurate action words. Some examples:

Adapt	Analyze
Collaborate on	Cultivate
Defuse	Harness
Enhance	Familiarize
Foster	Navigate
Initiate	Interpret
Leverage	Nurture
Persuade	Quadruple
Streamline	Synthesize
Target	Triple

2. Eliminate unnecessary or weak words, such as "which," "that," "there," "is," "was," "were," "has been," "have been" and "responsible for." For example, "managed office" is more direct than "was responsible for office management." Stronger verbs and tight descriptions make your resume crisp.

3. Keep it simple. For example, write "use" instead of "utilize." It's natural and more easily read.

4. Start every sentence with an action word.

5. Use present tense for your present job, past tense for all previous jobs.

6. Keep sentences brief. For example, if you're changing careers, you may want the first sentence of a brief goal statement to read, "Transition to and establish career in X."

7. Instead of explaining big changes at your current employment in detail, write "Thrived amid four mergers/acquisitions." From this brief sentence, readers can easily infer your flexibility and relationship skills.

8. Pretend you're the reader. As an employer, what would you want to know?

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What Employers Want...

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9. In what ways does your job affect the overall success of your employer? This core focus is what really matters to any employer.

10. What's your "elevator speech?" If you ran into a prospective employer in an elevator, how would you describe what you do in three or four concise sentences, before the elevator arrives at the employer's floor? Think about it. Once you've figured this out, drop the word "I" from each sentence and, voila, you have the blurb for your present position.