

# Resume Development

## RESUME WRITING TIPS

Contractors are looking to hire a well-rounded candidate who has the ability to learn and perform tasks assigned with little supervision. They also want workers who have “soft” skills, such as the ability to communicate effectively and come to work on time. Contractors complain that it’s often difficult to find female candidates who possess both technical skills and the soft skills necessary to be successful in the construction industry. In a slow market, contractors can afford to be picky with the candidates they hire.

To stand out as a candidate, you can use a non-traditional resume to highlight your skills and abilities. Even if a potential contractor does not require a resume or asks you to fill out an application, bring a copy of resume to the interview.

### KEEP IT CONCISE

Employers have lots to do, so don’t make the mistake of asking them to read an unnecessarily long resume. A long, wordy resume will put off someone who is already short on time. Resumes should be one page, if possible, and two **only if absolutely necessary** to describe **relevant work experience**.

### MAKE YOUR WORDS COUNT

Your use of language is extremely important; you need to sell yourself to an employer quickly and efficiently. Avoid large paragraphs (over six or seven lines). In the construction industry, resumes are often only scanned by the hiring managers, so make sure your resume is clear and to the point.

- Make sure your objective applies to the position in which you are applying.
- Use action verbs to emphasize your accomplishments.
- Don’t use declarative sentences like “I developed the…” or “I assisted in…”
- Leave out the “I”.
- Avoid passive constructions, like “was responsible for managing.”
- Elaborate on the jobs that emphasize your non-traditional experience

### MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR EXPERIENCES

Potential employers need to know what you have accomplished to have an idea of what you can do for them. If you can help it, don’t be vague. Describe things that can be measured objectively. For instance, saying that you “fixed things around the house” doesn’t have nearly the same impact as “repaired drywall” or “fixed leaky toilet.” Remember to include experience relevant to the job you are targeting, however, some traditional job experience can also apply to a non-traditional resume. If it doesn’t relate to the job you are applying for in some way, don’t elaborate on it!

### BE HONEST

There is a difference between making the most of your experiences and exaggerating or falsifying it. Employers will feel more comfortable hiring you if they can verify your accomplishments and places of employment. Also, a falsified resume can easily be spotted by an employer (if not immediately then during the interview process,) and if it doesn’t prevent you from getting a job right away, it can certainly cost you your job later on.

## **DON'T NEGLECT APPEARANCE**

Your resume is the first impression you'll make on a potential employer. In addition to what you say, pay close attention to how you say it. Check your resume for proper grammar and correct spelling. This is evidence of good communication skills and shows attention to detail. Make sure you avoid unusual or exotic font styles; **just use simple fonts and uniform spacing**. This will keep your resume professional looking and easy on the eyes. Also, use quality paper in white, ivory or otherwise neutral shades. If you need to make copies of your resume on a copier, make sure your copies are clean and clear. Even the best looking resume can be ruined by poor quality copying.

## **ELIMINATE UNNECESSARY DETAILS**

Unnecessary details can take up a lot of valuable space on your resume. Don't mention personal characteristics such as age, height and marital status. This is information that employers may not legally solicit from you, and they would probably be more comfortable if you don't volunteer it yourself.

List your hobbies and interests only if you can relate them to the position you're applying for, and only if you have room for them. If your resume looks crowded, avoid listing hobbies and interests altogether

Do not list vague "objective" statements. Phrases such as "seeking a rewarding position" can be a turn off to a potential employer. List an objective clearly, like "Grounds Engineer" or "Position as apprentice carpenter," or else don't have an objective line at all.

## **CONTACT INFORMATION**

Hiring managers use the contact information on your resume to contact you for interviews and job information. Make sure that your contact information is accurate and professional. If a hiring manager is trying to contact you, but has to listen to a long voicemail that contains music and/or profanity, etc., he is likely to hang up. Some of the most common mistakes are:

- Telephone number is incorrect and/or disconnected
- Voicemail and/or email address is offensive and/or too long
- Email/address is incorrect
- Avoid using PO Boxes

**Resume writing is a form of marketing or advertising. The product is you. Blow your own trumpet, emphasis your characteristics, your capabilities and achievements - this is all fine - but know where to draw the line. Positive emphasis and strong presentation is good; falsehoods are not.**



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