



# 10 TIPS FOR CRAFTING COMPELLING RESUMES

1. **Develop a “value proposition.”** A starting point for any resume, the [value proposition](#), is a unique, powerful, and consistent message to employers answering the question “why should we hire you?” Consider your buying motivators (i.e., what benefits do you bring to the employer?), supporting qualifications (i.e., what skills, knowledge, and abilities can you offer?), and value added (i.e., how do you exceed the requirements for the position?).
2. **Capture the reader’s attention.** The first third of page one is critical; it should contain a compelling qualification summary and/or profile related to your value proposition. Use this section to capture the reader’s attention, convey your message, and encourage him/her to read more.
3. **Map out your resume.** Your resume is precious “real estate”; determine how much space you’ll devote to each section of your resume (e.g., work experience, education). Avoid unnecessary details and duplication; ask yourself, “Is this relevant? Is this adding any value?” If not, then leave it off.
4. **Include SAR statements.** Describe the Situation, Action, and Result (SAR) to demonstrate your qualifications. The Situation is the specific problem/challenge you encountered, the Action is what you did to resolve that issue, and the Result is the outcome of your actions. Wherever possible, quantify the result (e.g., after 3 months customer feedback improved by 15%).
5. **Select appropriate fonts.** Although you may have a personal preference for a specific font, ensure the font you select is easy to read. Play with font formatting (e.g., size, colour, bold, italics) for points of emphasis (e.g., headings). Limit yourself to one or two font styles and use them intentionally; too many fonts results in a messy and unprofessional document. [Click here](#) to learn more about use of fonts for your resume.
6. **Format carefully.** Ensure your resume has a clean look and each section is easy to find and skim through. Use styles (e.g., bullet formats) consistently. Create a header for your name and contact information that can also serve as letterhead for your cover letter and other communication with potential employers.
7. **Align consistently.** Set [custom tabs](#) or use [tables](#) to format lists with multiple columns. Avoid using spaces to align text as things can shift quite easily. This will ensure a clean look to your document and avoid odd word wrapping and unaligned information.
8. **Be brief.** Tell the employers as clearly and concisely as possible what they need to know. Avoid run on sentences; use bullets and commas to allow readers to pause. For more writing tips see [10 Tips for Writing Professional Documents](#).
9. **Check your spelling/grammar.** Ensure your computer’s spell check and language is on the appropriate setting (e.g., Canadian English) so you don’t miss errors or use words inconsistently (e.g., center vs. centre). A word of caution: the computer isn’t foolproof and sometimes the “autocorrect” feature makes incorrect adjustments; ultimately it’s up to you to proofread carefully to ensure your message gets across.
10. **Be error free.** Resume errors often result in a candidate being screened out before an interview. Edit, edit, edit – have a “second set of eyes” look at your resume, review a printed copy, or read it out loud. For more editing strategies see [10 Tips for Editing Professional Documents](#).

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