

RESUME WRITING TIPS FOR TECHNICAL PROFESSIONALS

The overall purpose of your resume is to highlight your accomplishments and qualifications to a potential employer. You want your resume to paint a clear picture of how your unique skill-set can benefit their company and the particular position you are interested in.

No matter how well written and organized it is, a resume will not get you a job by itself. However, a well-crafted resume will attract the attention of the hiring manager and give you a clear advantage when vying for a phone or in-person interview. To help you along the way, we've included a few guidelines to use as you write or update your technical resume.

STRUCTURE YOUR RESUME FOR IMPACT AND CLARITY.

Your resume will serve as a potential employer's first example of your communication and organizational skills. For this reason, the information you present must be logically structured and clearly written. One of the most common and acceptable ways to organize a technical resume is as follows:

1. **Name and Contact Information:** This information, which includes your full name, address, phone number and email address, should be centered in bold type at the top of the first page.
2. **Objective:** This is a brief statement about how you could use your skills to successfully fulfill the roles and responsibilities related to the job.
3. **Skills Summary:** This brief summary area is used to catch the eye of a potential employer. It highlights important experiences and areas of expertise (i.e. hardware, software, languages, databases, operating systems, web tools, etc.) from your current and past jobs. List only areas you are proficient in, and leave out tools/environments you do not want to continue working in.
4. **Employment History:** Starting with the most recent, this section describes work experiences from the past 15 years. It should include the dates of employment, the job title, company name and brief, bulleted descriptions of your roles and responsibilities for each job included.
5. **Education and Certifications:** This section includes the name, city and state of all colleges, universities and technical institutions you've attended, your degree, certification or field of study and your grade point average (if applicable). You can also include any training courses, seminars and workshops you've completed in this section.
6. **Achievements:** This section should contain a short list of achievements and awards related to your career and education.

Even if you list your technical skills in a summary section, research has shown that hiring managers for technical positions want to know which skills you used for each job you've had. Make sure to include that specific information in your Employment History.

If you worked in a temporary or contract positions, note that in your Employment History to avoid the impression that you change jobs relatively quickly.

KEEP IT CONCISE.

Employers have lots to do, so don't make the mistake of asking them to read through 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 if absolutely necessary to describe relevant work experience. A two-page resume is no advantage if it's full of information that isn't reasonably applicable to the position you're applying for. Use the space only if you need it to fully disclose your accomplishments.

CHOOSE YOUR WORDS CAREFULLY.

Your use of language is extremely important; you need to sell yourself to an employer quickly and efficiently. Address your potential employer's needs with a clearly written, compelling resume.

- Avoid large paragraphs (over six or seven lines) as resumes are often scanned by hiring managers. If you provide small, digestible pieces of information, you stand a better chance of having your resume actually read.
- Use action verbs such as "developed", "managed" and "designed" to emphasize your accomplishments.
- Don't use declarative sentences like "I developed the..." or "I assisted in..."; Leave out the "I".
- Avoid passive constructions, such as "was responsible for managing". It's not only more efficient to say "Managed", it's stronger and more active.

See a full list of Action Verbs in the Resource section.

MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR EXPERIENCE.

Potential employers need to know what you have accomplished to have an idea of what you can do for them.

- Don't be vague. Describe things that can be measured objectively. Telling someone that you "improved warehouse efficiency" doesn't say much. Telling them that you "cut requisition costs by 20%, saving the company \$3800 for the fiscal year" does. Employers will feel more comfortable hiring you if they can verify your accomplishments.
- Be honest. There is a difference between making the most of your experience and exaggerating or falsifying it. A falsified resume can be easily spotted by an employer (if not immediately, then during the interview process). If it doesn't prevent you from getting the job, it can cost you the job later on.

DON'T NEGLECT APPEARANCE.

Your resume is the first impression you'll make on a potential employer, and a successful resume depends on more than what you say. Before you finalize your resume, make sure you:

- Check it for proper grammar and correct spelling – evidence of good communication skills and attention to detail. Nothing can ruin your chances of getting a job faster than submitting a resume filled with easily preventable mistakes.
- Make sure your resume is easy on the eyes. Use normal margins (1" on the top and bottom, 1.25" on the sides) and don't cram your text onto the page. Allow for some breathing room between the different sections. Avoid unusual or exotic font styles; Use simple fonts with a professional look.

For more information about how to successfully write a technical resume, please contact Prism Group today.