

# 10 Ways to Improve Your Resume to Get Hired

Keywords: resume, resume builder, resume template, how to write a resume, ATS

When you are seeking new roles within your industry, it is important to stand out as an applicant. This may initially feel daunting considering individual job postings receive on average +100 applicants. Before you continue your job search, read on to find 10 tips on how to craft a resume to stand out to hiring managers and increase your chances of getting an interview.

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## 1. Don't Put Your Contact Info in the Header Section

Companies filter resumes through an "applicant tracking system" (ATS). ATS systems scan content ONLY found in the main body of the resume. Don't put any information in the header or footer.

Up to 75% of resumes fail this test and don't make it into the hands of actual HR. One reason is that applicants fail to format their resume properly.

That means you could be the most qualified applicant for the role. But hiring managers never saw your resume because it didn't have an "ATS" format.

## 2. Include Acronym AND Long-Form Versions of Technical Skills

Having technical skills are a huge plus, especially if the particular skill is mentioned in the job post.

But ATS can't identify acronyms/skills unless they're fully spelled out—so include both.

Don't just write "SEO". Instead write "Search Engine Optimization (SEO)".

This way when recruiters search for key skills—whether acronym or long-form—your resume will definitely show up.



### 3. Tailor Your Resume to Each Job Post

Different job posts may list different technical skills required for the job—even if they're in the same field. Make your resume stand out by customizing your technical skills to each particular job post.

Creating a different resume for each job post increases your chances of matching the job description and not being filtered out by the ATS.

Let's say Job X lists the following as required skills:

- Email Marketing
- SEO
- Ecommerce

You DO emphasize having such skills in your work experience, but not in the exact wording found in Job X's job description.

But applicant tracking systems (ATS) can't differentiate between "similar" skills. So, you should use keywords EXACTLY as they appear in the job description.

### 4. Use a Favorable Resume Format

There are 3 resume formats to choose from:

- Hybrid
- Functional
- Chronological

You may wonder which format may be the best fit for you, but the answer's probably a lot simpler than you imagined: hybrid.

Hybrid formats always make you look more favorable with HR, emphasizing both work experience and skills. They also work well for both seasoned professionals and recent college grads.

And if you have limited work experience, internships qualify as "work experience". This will give you an advantage in entry-level job applications because it shows both experience and initiative.

Recruiters are known for always looking at your "work experience" section first, regardless of where it's located.

Functional formats de-emphasize work experience and are therefore unfavorably viewed. And chronological resumes show your skills at the end of your resume.

Job seekers have access to a wide range of resume templates and professional templates online. These include professional resume templates by Microsoft Word and Google Docs.



You can also create a resume online using an AI resume builder, which allows you to build a new resume or update your existing one—often in just a few minutes—thanks to a user-friendly interface. You could also utilize free resume building websites. These websites offer resume samples and the ability to create multiple versions of your resume tailored to different job applications.

This way you will have a rough outline of your skills, education, and professional experience. A great way to get started is by searching any of the following on the web:

- resume builder
- resume template
- how to make a resume
- how to write a resume

However, it's recommended to use a template generated by software only as a starting point. Resume-creating websites only provide you with a resume template; they don't provide any editing features.

An AI software such as Chat GPT could hypothetically edit your resume; however, even the most advanced AI struggles to understand nuances of natural writing patterns (writing done by an actual person). This results in writing that is often not aligned with the document's appropriate context. Furthermore, punctuation marks such as semicolons are often used in an aimless manner.

Hiring a professional resume editor will allow you to describe your professional background, future career desires, and technical acronyms in your field. The resume editor will then tailor your resume to your liking and edit it for professionalism and clarity.



## 5. Hard Skills vs Soft Skills

To impress HRs with your resume, it's important to list your skillset in an effective manner. Professionals sometimes make the mistake of prioritizing their soft skills over hard skills.

However, hard skills are what show your competency. Properly emphasizing your hard skills will not only show recruiters you are a viable candidate, but you'll have an advantage over other applicants.

Ideally, you want to emphasize your technical ability (hard skills) while also showing you fit well into company culture (soft skills). Finding a balance may feel overwhelming. The trick lies in listing out your technical/hard skills in its own section. Then, under "work experience" delve into anecdotes that show how you used your technical AND soft skills to achieve company objectives.

## 6. Consistent Formatting

Recruiters take notice of your formatting presentation--and it's easy to tend to.

Under the work experience section for each company you have worked for, list out the following in a consistent format:

- Company Name and Location
- Job Title
- Start and End Dates

(Note, list your work experience in reverse chronological order, starting with your most recent position.)

For dates, use either “MM/YYYY” formatting, or the month spelled out followed by the year, for example, “January 2023”.

## 7. Showcase Your Performance with Metrics

HRs tend to skim through resumes to see if you're a qualified candidate.

Bullet points will provide your credentials in a succinct manner. Combine action verbs with numbers and metrics to showcase your performance from previous companies.

Action verbs (provide, lead, conducted, improved etc.) show confidence and capability.

Metrics (percentages, time saved, revenue gained) prove your results.

For example, a chemical engineer might say:



- Improved biological processes resulting 30% increase in cost efficiency

Or

- Conducted quality control procedures resulting 25% decrease of accidents.

It's important to tailor each resume to each individual job application! This shows recruiters your initiative and an eye for detail for what the job requires.

## 8. Use Both Present Tense and Past Tense (Effectively)

Knowing your way around certain grammatical rules can help you stand out more with employers; this includes effectively switching between past and present tense. Doing so will make it easier for hiring managers to navigate your resume.

Use present tense for two sections:

1. Career Summary
2. Current Company/Role

For the former, it will convey the expertise accumulated throughout your years as a professional.

For the latter, it will differentiate job responsibilities held in your current job versus jobs you may have held in previous companies.

Naturally, jobs held in previous companies should be written in past tense.

## 9. Write a Compelling Resume Summary

Your resume summary should be placed right under your name and contact information. Summarize the comprehensive knowledge you have accumulated during your professional career and education.

Include any certifications you may have, as well as standards or regulations that you adhere to that are applicable in your field.

Your goal here is to convey how you are an asset to any company that hires you. Remember, this section is a *summary* and should be no more than 5-10 sentences, depending on your amount of experience.

## 10. Stay Organized

Keep your resume drafts organized for an efficient job search process. As you tailor your resume for different job applications, you will end up with multiple versions highlighting various skills and experiences.

Create a folder on your computer or cloud storage specifically for job applications. Then label each resume draft with the job title and company name it targets. This will avoid confusion and you won't accidentally send the wrong resume to a potential employer.



## Bonus Tips

### 11. How to Write a Resume Headline with Limited Experience

Resume headlines are one of the most effective ways to make your application stand out. It's a short statement introducing yourself as a professional. And besides your name, the first thing recruiters see on your resume.

If you're a recent college grad with limited work experience, use experiences gained from internships and coursework, in your headline. And since most applicants don't include one, it's both an easy and effective way to grab employers' attention. However, it will only serve its purpose if used correctly.

The trick is to read the job description and see which words are repeated throughout. For example, for an entry-level marketing job the key words might be "PR" and "client".

An effective headline would be: "Entertainment PR-experienced intern that's passionate about developing client relationships." Applicant tracking systems (ATS) will scan your resume and catch the key words. Your resume will then reach hiring managers instead of being filtered out.

### 12. Make your Resume Stand out with Action Verbs and Metrics

If you are still struggling with formulating action verbs with metrics in your resume, here are some more examples to get your feet wet.

For example, if you are in Tech/Engineering you might say:

- “Led a team of 6 engineers to deploy a cloud migration project, reducing costs by 25% annually.”
- “Implemented safety protocols that decreased system failures by 18%.”

Or if you are in Marketing/Sales:

- “Developed and launched a digital campaign that increased lead conversions by 42%.”
- “Negotiated partnerships that grew revenue by \$2.3M over 12 months.”

