

Six Steps to A Resume Upgrade

Excerpts from Karen Hofferber article (adapted by Stephanie Zacharkiw - Career Advisor)

1. Find Your Focus

First step is to clarify your job target. Do I want to work in Sales, IT, Administration? Without a clear vision of your career direction, your resume won't do a good job selling your skills to potential employers. If you have more than one career interest, you will need to develop different versions of your resume. One-size-fits-all document don't work anymore.

2. Research Your Target

Thoroughly research your job target before writing the first draft of your resume. Talk to people in your target industry, and read through relevant job postings on Monster to get a good idea of the qualifications employers are looking for and key words to include.

3. Develop Your Profile/Qualifications Summary

Now you're ready to begin writing. Don't expect busy hiring managers to figure out what you want to do. Use this section to explain key skills that relate to their needs. For example, if communication skills are important, then you need to show how you have used your communication skills in past jobs. **Emphasize how you can help the employer, rather than what you want in a job.** It is not about what you want to tell them, it is about telling them what they need to know that will convince them to bring you in for an interview

You can also use the Objective section on Monster's Resume Builder to write a compelling Profile or Qualifications Summary. This is the perfect place to write a few hard-hitting sentences emphasizing your experience and the value you bring to the table.

4. Zero in on Your Achievements

Your resume must have an **accomplishments-driven focus** to compete in today's job market and maximize calls for interviews. Avoid simply rehashing job descriptions. Instead, detail the results and outcomes of your efforts.

For each of the positions you've held, use action verbs to describe how you contributed to your employers, such as: cut costs, generated revenue, improved service, enhanced processes, solved problems or saved time. If possible, use numbers, percentages, dollar amounts, comparisons or other key details to back up your claims. Be sure not to reveal facts that disclose confidential company information.

You can also qualify your achievements as well. For example, “Supervised a team of 8 which led to increased productivity”

Don't forget about the importance of soft skills (Communication, Team work, Organization, Pro-Active, Leadership, Analytical, Problem-solving etc)

5. Include "Key Words" And Make Your Resume Scannable

These days many employers review resumes electronically. They want you to send it to them in ways that a computer can easily read and sort.

So avoid using fancy fonts or complex layouts. Also make sure that your updated resume includes plenty of relevant key words from the posting. Look for words, phrases and credentials that continually pop up in ads you want to apply to. If you see terms used frequently, they should probably be in your resume whenever applicable. Pay attention to skills that aren't mentioned in these ads as well, and remove items from your old resume that will make you seem outdated.

6. Proofread and Test-Drive

Your resume must be perfect. Carefully proofread your resume to ensure proper grammar, punctuation and spelling.

DID YOU KNOW???

Figure 1: Employers rate the importance of candidate skills/qualities

Skill/Quality	Weighted average rating*
Ability to work in a team structure	4.55
Ability to make decisions and solve problems	4.50
Ability to plan, organize, and prioritize work	4.48
Ability to verbally communicate with persons inside and outside the organization	4.48
Ability to obtain and process information	4.37
Ability to analyze quantitative data	4.25
Technical knowledge related to the job	4.01
Proficiency with computer software programs	3.94
Ability to create and/or edit written reports	3.62
Ability to sell or influence others	3.54

*5-point scale, where 1=Not at all important; 2=Not very important; 3=Somewhat important; 4=Very important; and 5=Extremely important

Source: *Job Outlook 2014*, National Association of Colleges and Employers