

15 Resume Writing Tips from Today's Top Career Experts

Posted on [September 21, 2015](#) by [James Hu](#)

Employers usually make a split-second decision about whether to contact you when they first see your resume. Which makes it essential to [create](#) a resume that makes a great first impression.

For advice on how to write a resume that does exactly that, read these great tips we collected from 15 of today's top career experts!



The First 10 Seconds Count

Brian Shoicket, university & community programs lead at Uncubed, says recruiters only spend about 10 seconds looking at each resume—so it is crucial to make your resume concise, structured, and specific. Focus on [resume keywords](#) that recruiters, hiring managers, and [applicant tracking systems](#) look for by using a resume analysis tool such as [Jobscan](#). Include as many of the keywords from the job posting on your resume as you can.

Link Your Resume to Your Internet Presence

Nancy Range Anderson is president of Blackbird Learning Associates and author of the book *Job Search for Moms*. She recommends adding links to the websites of your past employers; this way, hiring managers can see what kind of work you have done, even if they are not familiar with the companies you have worked for. Additionally, you can include a link to your [LinkedIn](#) profile in your resume's contact information section. Social media is becoming an increasingly important part of the job search.

Choose Your Prospective Employers Carefully

Meg Guiseppi is the CEO of Executive Career Brand, personal branding expert of [job-hunt.org](#), and author of numerous ebooks. She advises job seekers to [research potential employers](#) thoroughly—before even writing their resumes. Start by choosing 10 to 15 employers of interest. Read about their missions, activities, and challenges, and decide how your background and skills make you a good candidate to work for them. Then tailor your [application](#) materials accordingly.

Mention Your Most Important Qualifications in Your Cover Letter

Lori Derming of Derming Consulting says a strong cover letter helps you make a good first impression. Your cover letter should demonstrate your interest in the role, and make it clear why you would be a good fit. Mention at least three of the qualities specified in the job description, and explain how you have demonstrated these qualities. Be as specific as possible.

Provide a Summary

John Scott, a career advocate at Career Network, recommended including a [career summary](#) if you have been working in your target field for more than five years. A career summary should be brief, and describe the skills and experiences most relevant to the job for which you are applying. It should be specific to you—if it's vague enough that it could apply to anyone in your field, it doesn't provide any benefit. If you are new to a field, or even just new to the workforce, then a career summary is not necessary. And no matter how long you've been working, skip the [resume objective](#) entirely.

Do Your Homework

Shahrazad Arasteh is a holistic career counselor, speaker, and author of *Nourish Your Career*. She emphasizes the importance of researching the positions for which you are applying. Specifically, she recommends trying to speak to current or former employees to learn about the company and the position. Try to find out how your target job fits into the overall operations of the organization. This will help you evaluate whether you are a good fit for the job, and provide direction for tailoring your resume. One of the most important resume tips is the fact that length doesn't make your resume better—relevance does.

Focus on the Future, Not The Past

Lisa Rangel of Chameleon Resumes says that the purpose of your resume is to show potential employers what you can help them achieve in the future, not merely a summary of things you have done in the past. Highlight the valuable things you can accomplish in your target position. Demonstrate your value using [accomplishment statements](#) to show how you can benefit a company.



Be Straightforward

Susan Heathfield is a human resources expert at About.com. Her best resume tip is that honesty is the best policy; glossing over inconvenient truths can make recruiters wary. For example, sometimes job seekers list the university they attended, and hope employers will assume they graduated. Or they try to hide periods of unemployment by listing only the years of their [employment dates](#), instead of months and years. These tactics make you look less than honest. Be clear about any gaps in employment, and don't try to inflate your experience. She also recommends being clear about how your previous roles have prepared you for your target job. Make it easy for a hiring manager to see how your experience is valuable and relevant.

Ask Family and Friends for Advice

Robin Richards, chairman and CEO of CareerArc, recommends seeking the advice of family, friends, and co-workers. Ask your friends, colleagues, and relatives to read your resume and offer constructive criticism. Career experts or not, those close to you can offer useful resume tips because they're familiar with your accomplishments. They may even point out accomplishments that you had taken for granted.

Make Your Online Presence Professional and Consistent

Sara Sutton Fell, founder and CEO of FlexJobs, offers a high-tech resume tip. Because employers will search for you online, make yourself easy to find, and make your online presence as professional as possible. Sara recommends [posting](#) an updated version of your resume online. Make sure your online presence is consistent; the information on your LinkedIn and other social media accounts should match, and align the resume you post online. You do not have to post every detail everywhere, but obvious discrepancies will raise a red flag. If you do not already have one, create an About.me page. You could even start a blog related to your field.

Provide Perfectly Targeted Information

Miriam Salpeter, speaker and coach at Keppie Careers and author of *Social Networking for Career Success*, says every item on your resume should be written with your target job in mind. Think about how everything you have done in your career is relevant to the job for which you are applying. If it isn't relevant, it doesn't belong. Again, research is essential. The more you know about a prospective employer, the better you can convey how you would be an asset to them.

Know Brevity is Best

Jay Martin, founder and chairman of JobSerf, says your resume should be no longer than two pages. If you have seven or fewer years of experience in the workforce, then your resume should only be one page. Those with lots of professional experience can create detailed LinkedIn profiles chronicling their careers, but [resumes should always be concise](#).

Immerse Yourself in Your New Professional Field

Janet Scarborough Civitelli, Ph.D., is a career coach at VocationVillage.com and author of *Help Me Find a Career: Strategies to Choose Work You Will Love*. She says that, when changing careers, it is important to immerse yourself in your new field before you begin applying for jobs. This may include volunteer work, taking classes, or joining a professional association. Showing that you have familiarity and experience with your new field is critical.

Write a Mini Business Plan

Nick Corcodilos is host of Ask The Headhunter and author of *Fearless Job Hunting*. He recommends writing a mini business plan containing your ideas about what you would do if hired at your target job. Present this to the hiring manager directly. Don't send it off to the company's generic human resources email address. If you do not know the manager, initiate contact with him or her before submitting your business plan. This approach forces you to network, which is an important part of career success.

Don't Allow Mistakes

Lisa Quast is the founder of Career Woman, Inc. and author of numerous books, including her latest, *Secrets of a Hiring Manager Turned Career Coach: A Foolproof Guide to Getting the Job You Want—Every Time*. She emphasizes the importance of having a mistake-free resume. If your resume has errors, it's reasonable for employers to conclude that your work will, too.

