



Tips for Writing Effective Resumes

A recruiter at a leading international consulting firm (which receives thousands of resumes per year) said if your resume doesn't grab her within 30 seconds she discards it. She emphasized the need to do a summary of qualifications, to use the relevant language (buzzwords, but not too much jargon), emphasize your relevant experience, and make sure it is well organized and easy to read.

Here are some general tips. Please always make sure to consider the type of employer you're applying for (private sector, nonprofit, foundation, government, etc.) and the geographic location. As the norms around what is expected in a resume and appropriate design vary significantly by region and type of employer.

Types of Resumes:

Chronological: List education/experience in reverse chronological order (most recent to past).

Functional: Group experience by particular skills areas and then list work history.

Combination: Some people combine these.

Resume Tips:

Qualifications Summary: At the top of your resume consider adding a short qualifications statement that highlights your experience relevant to the position. Make sure this is relatively short (no more than a paragraph or two), focus on relevant experience, put in buzzwords relevant to the employer, etc.

Example: Conflict Resolution Practitioner with over five years experience conducting mediation, training and facilitation in the US and Latin America. Trained over 500 people in basic mediation techniques in over 10

countries. Specialization includes: youth and conflict, community-based processes. VA certified mediator and fluent in English and Spanish.

Quantify Language: Whenever possible (and when it is to your benefit) be concrete in what your responsibilities were and what you accomplished in your previous positions.

Example: Worked at the XYZ Conflict Resolution Organization, managed budget and conducted training.

Reframe to: Worked at the XYZ Conflict Resolution Organization, organized and managed a \$400,000 project. Successfully wrote grant proposals totalling over \$50,000 from X source. Conducted over 20 trainings in basic conflict resolution techniques with high school students and teachers, reaching over 500 people

Vocabulary: Try to avoid the use of passive language and wherever possible use active words.

Example of Some Words Relevant to Conflict Resolution/Peacebuilding: (list adapted from www.jobweb.com)

Analyzed, Assessed, Collaborated, Communicated, Evaluated, Explored, Facilitated, Generated, Guided, Managed, Mediated, Negotiated, Prevented, Researched, Solved, Taught, Trained, Transformed.

Length:

There is no standard agreement for length of resumes. In a conversation with a director of human resources for a consulting firm specializing in conflict resolution and development she indicated she prefers resumes that do not limit their length to provide as much relevant information as possible (particularly at the mid to senior-level).

Create Several Types of Resumes:

It is useful to have several types of resumes prepared for your job search so that you can rapidly adapt and submit a resume in response to a job opening (of course depending on your particular job search).

Academic/Research - Concentrate more on your academic and research experience. In particular highlight research projects, publications, membership in academic and policy networks.

Program Administration/Management – Focus on previous administration and program management experience. In particular highlight specific numbers, types of clients/funders worked with, specific skills (web, computer databases, etc)

Practice (Trainer, Facilitator, Mediator) – Focus on your experience providing training, facilitation, mediation or other practice/intervention services. In particular highlight specific numbers, types of clients, organizations, funders worked with, specific issues dealt with, or skills taught

Short 2 Pager: For a number of Government consulting projects resumes might be limited to two pages. Make sure to have a two pager on hand that you can submit (could be combination of research/management or focused more on one aspect)

