

RESUME REVIEW

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Simple Guidelines for a Better Resume

You need a resume that adequately reflects your accomplishments, education, and experience. The best time to assemble a resume is before you need one. This eliminates stress and ensures a better document. Remember your resume is your most important self-marketing tool for internal, external, and professional opportunities.

After reviewing hundreds of resumes every year and filling many administration, director, and management positions, we at Phillips, DiPisa & Associates have learned what our clients – key hiring authorities – prefer to see in resumes. Here are some tips to help you with yours!

Formatting

- **The perfect professional resume is not an esoteric document with fancy fonts.** Our clients look for a simply formatted, chronological resume clearly showing position title, dates of employment, employer's name, and responsibilities and accomplishments. That's it! Resumes deviating from this frustrate those reviewing them.
- **Use a chronological resume, not a functional one.** As stated above, chronological resumes (beginning with most recent position) are greatly preferred to functional resumes. Functional resumes group experience by skill or "function" and list employment dates separately at the end of the document. These resumes are hard to follow and clients HATE them. Attached is an example of a well-formatted, chronological resume.
- **Use the same margins you use for letters.** DO NOT right justify type (set margins to line-up text with right margin) or use tabs to make columns. In this electronic age, resumes that employ right type justification and excessive tabs become a mess when they're e-mailed; worse, these resumes tend to shorten the first page, and that's the most important part of the document! Resumes should employ standard margins (the default margins on computers are fine), left justification only, and no tabs.
- **Use one font or typeface throughout the entire resume.** Too many type faces make a resume look sloppy and interfere with the flow for the reader. Select a standard typeface available on all computers: Times Roman, Garamond, and Century Schoolbook are good choices.
- **You only need two font styles: plain type and bold.** People overuse CAPS, Small CAPS, italics, and underlining resulting in a format that undermines content. Use bold for your name, your position title, employment dates, and employing organization. The only exception to this rule is if you have been published. Book titles, academic journal titles, and conference proceedings should be italicized. Journal articles should be placed in quotation marks.
- **Make sure your reader can see the type.** Use either 11 or 12 point size. There is no need to vary the size of type within the document.
- **Keep an eye on consistency.** Whatever areas you decide to bold, make sure you're consistent throughout the entire resume. Make sure your verb tenses are consistent as well. (It's OK to use either first person or third person tense when describing current activities, but you must choose one and stick with it. Also, be sure past positions/activities are described in past tense.)
- **Spacing is a simple thing,** but if it's not consistent your resume will look sloppy. Spacing after words and lines should all be consistent.
- **Include Accurate Dates.** For both education and work experience.
- **Watch out for numbers.** Numbers one through nine are spelled out, as are all numbers that begin a sentence.

Content

- **Demonstrate your expertise in three areas:** competence, expertise, leadership.
- **Demonstrate scope of responsibilities in numbers whenever possible.** For instance: “Provides operations management and leadership within.” It’s often a good idea to do this for the first bullet under a particular job since it gives the reader an immediate frame of reference.
- **Develop bullet points with outcomes in mind** and whenever appropriate quantify them. Three to five clearly stated measurable outcomes under each recent position allow the reader to determine what you offer as compared to others applicants who have also managed a 190-bed acute care community, for instance.
- **Make your resume a flexible document** rather than a stagnant manuscript. No resume will capture all your accomplishments unless you are just beginning your career. If you are interested in a particular position modify your accomplishments to reflect those that more closely match what the organization is seeking. Have more than one resume, one that positions you for that first COO job vs. one that promotes your “Patient Services” strengths. Or develop an extensive list of 10-15 accomplishments in your last few positions and select the grouping based on the particular position.
- **If your experience is broad, list the details for the past 10-15 years** and summarize earlier positions with dates, title, and organization only. However, there is nothing magic about a two page resume; if you need three or four to adequately present yourself, do it.
- **Use a “Summary of Qualifications” instead of an “Objective”** at the top of your resume. Three or four bullets or sentences summing up your best capabilities will draw the reader into your resume immediately. We find this section is easier to develop after the rest of the resume is written.
- **Make your education as clear to others as it is to you.** Spell out degrees (e.g. Bachelor of Science). Place graduation dates on the same line as degrees and always include location of College / University.
- **Those who are extensively published or have significant research** should attach a separate word document versus including that on the resume. Resumes are preferred, in most cases, over curriculum vitae.

A Few More Tips

- **Keep your resume on your home computer.** Even if you’re not looking for a job at the moment, it’s a good idea to keep your resume in a private place outside of your place of employment. If you don’t have a computer, save your resume on a disk so you can update it at places like Kinkos, which rents computer time.
- **Use your home internet service to e-mail your resume.** Again, this keeps your job search private. Just make sure your e-mail address reflects a professional persona. You can get additional e-mail addresses at no charge through Yahoo or Hotmail.
- **Title and save your resume** with last name, first name, resume.doc. For example, Doe, Jane resume.doc. Make sure you include your name and resume in the subject box which will help the person you are sending the resume to find it with ease without having to open the attachment.
- **An e-mail cover letter** should briefly state why you are sending the resume, and if you are applying beyond the local area, state your willingness to relocate for the right opportunity.

SAMPLE

John E. Doe
123 Commonwealth Avenue, Apt. #321
Boston, MA 02116
(617) 555-1234
E-mail: JohnDoe8@prodigy.net

Summary of Qualifications

Twenty-year professional career in health care including twelve years progressive management experience leading hospital and system-wide quality improvement and risk management programs. Excellent financial, information systems and communications skills. Expertise in data analysis and the design and implementation of strategies to improve patient outcomes and reduce operating costs.

Experience

St. Stephen's Hospital System, New Bedford, MA **Director of Quality Improvement (1996-present)**

Oversee eight facilities within the health care system with responsibility for achieving outcome-oriented quality measures. Directly supervise 20 employees.

- Provide continuity and coordination of quality issues via active participation on organizational and board level quality, peer review, risk management and compliance committees.
- Led JCAHO survey preparations resulting in improved scores from low to mid 90's. Developed three-year timeline for compliance, implemented tracking and monitoring systems.
- Promote patient safety and medical error reduction by developing regional workshop on sentinel events, root cause analysis, and medication safety. Attained 4% system-wide reduction in medical errors.
- Reduced hospital systems operating costs by \$750,000 annually through redesign of Pharmacy, Imaging, and Radiology services.
- Designed, administered, analyzed and reported all satisfaction surveys. Achieved 15% increase in overall patient satisfaction over past five years.
- Selected and implemented computer software system for management of occurrences reporting, trending, and follow up.

Gilbert Hospital, Fall River, MA **Manager, Risk Management (1990-1996)**

Collaborated in the development of a successful organization-wide risk management program within a 320-bed acute care community hospital, to promote timely identification and reporting of events with potential or actual adverse outcomes.

- Served as liaison with regulatory agencies, both for written reporting and on-site surveys.

A common mistake we frequently see on resumes is that accomplishments are not clearly articulated and often understated. Describing functional responsibilities, job scope or process does not convey your unique abilities and contributions to the organization.

The language you use in your resume is vital in terms of accurately and justly capturing your skills, abilities, and most importantly – your accomplishments. Be succinct and concrete in your communication and use powerful action verbs to draw the reader to your strengths. Below is a sample of words to reference when writing or revising your resume.

Advanced	Evaluated	Spearheaded
Achieved	Established	Shaped
Allocated	Examined	Specified
Analyzed	Executed	Supervised
Awarded	Formulated	Strengthened
Attained	Founded	Synthesized
Advocated	Generated	Simplified
Created	Implemented	Systematized
Coached	Initiated	
Customized	Integrated	
Chaired	Led	
Consolidated	Mediated	
Designed	Maximized	
Directed	Minimized (losses)	
Developed	Negotiated	
Demonstrated	Piloted	
Designed	Pioneered	
Delegated	Resolved (problems)	
Devised	Restored (funding, position)	
Enhanced	Restructured	
Eliminated	Serve	

To illustrate the power of words, review the following examples of revised accomplishments:

- Educated staff regarding cardiac care patients.
Revised: Served as clinical expert on care of cardiac patients and developed educational trainings to enhance staff competencies.
- Act as per diem, hospitalwide house supervisor.
Revised: Assume hospitalwide leadership role for patient care services and collaborate across departments to assure adequate staffing levels, oversee the admissions processes for all patients, and effectively resolve patient complaints.
- Participated as chair of recruitment and retention committee.
Revised: Led departmentwide nursing recruitment and retention committee which planned and created effective campaigns to exceed recruitment goals by 12% in one year.

In the three examples, the revised versions use more powerful language and provide more specifics about the roles and accomplishments.