

15 QUESTIONS TO TAKE YOUR RESUME FROM BLAH TO BOOM!

Before we get to the 15 questions, keep in mind two critical factors:

Think about the reader!

Realize no one likes reading resumes! Why? Because they get completely inundated for just one open position with resumes that are poorly written, do not meet the qualifications or contain “exaggerations”.

What this means for you: You need to grab their attention **immediately** and **keep it!** Remove any reason for them to eliminate you as a candidate by using the 15 tips below to answer their most important question - what can you do for me – in a clear and effective way.

The two most critical elements most often missing in resumes – your voice and your value

We call this the V Formula, it is simply your value in your voice creates visibility. Your resume should sound like **you** and demonstrate the value that you have given to your current and previous employers.

15 QUESTIONS TO REVAMP YOUR RESUME!

-  **1** **Are there mistakes?** If you cannot take the time to create an error-free sales statement representing you; how will you represent their company? Spell check is not foolproof, “I worked four XYZ company” will not get flagged by spellcheck, but it will by a prospective employer!
-  **2** **Is there a focus?** The reader is focused on filling a position; your job is to sell yourself as **THE** candidate to fill that position. Start your resume with the position as a title, in your branding statement or in your opening paragraph. Continue to substantiate yourself as a candidate by demonstrating your successes, expertise and skills in your opening statement and bullet points. This creates a constant focus throughout the resume on the position and you as the ideal candidate.
-  **3** **Is it all about you?** Gone are the days when we use objective statements like, “I am looking for a job that I can use my skills and abilities to improve revenues/efficiencies/etc and advance in my career”? Your resume really is not about what you want; it is about what you bring to the table to solve their problems, in short – what you can do for them. Use the space to demonstrate your successes, expertise and abilities and how it will add immediate value to the position and company.
-  **4** **Did you set the stage.** Replace the objective statement with an opening (short) paragraph, two to four sentences long. Use it to set the stage for the rest of the resume. Here is where you tell them you most important skills, environments/industries in which you worked, how you do what you do better than anyone else; in essence, why they want to talk to you rather than any other candidate!
-  **5** **Did you describe what you were hired to do or what you did?** Again, this is all about value. Often bullet points are set up from a duty driven perspective; people list their job duties. That is all well and fine but that does not tell the employer if you actually did those duties and did them well. Instead of stating that you managed 20 people on a sales floor, tell them how you managed them and how that improved their performance or sales for the company.
-  **6** **Did you excite, entice and engage them!** Using manage, responsible for, participated and duties included are boring and they convey no value. Use words that resonate with you to describe your value. If you are a real go-getter then you should be using words like drive, innovative and captured!
-  **7** **Did you answer their unasked question: What can you do for me?** Address this by describing how you made or saved money; built or deepened relationships; expanded territories, businesses or product lines; made things more efficient and/or attracted, retained and grew new and existing customers.


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Did you eliminate minutia? It is not necessary to describe every single detail of your current/past jobs. Some duties will be unrelated to the position for which you are applying; others will be assumed. Use your space wisely; focus on critical qualifications that align with your skills and successes.


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Did you write toward the job you want? Looking to move up in your career or make a change but don't have the exact experience that is required? Don't lose hope; re-evaluate your current and past positions from a skill set perspective. Identify the synchronicities between the skills required to do the duties and how you have utilized these skills in the past, no matter what industry or job. For example, if the required duties necessitate attention to detail, organization and exceptional communication skills then identify where you have successfully utilized these skills and write from a skill perspective. If you have had a taste of the position in your current or past position, but it was only a small part of your role, utilize the 80/20 rule. Make your summary/bullet points 80% of that aspect of the job and the remaining 20% you can describe the other aspects of the job.


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Has your resume been struck by too many or too few bullets? Bullet points should be no longer than two lines (if it looks hard to read or too much to read, the reader is not going to want to read it) so utilize bullets instead of paragraphs. If you find that you have a long, long list of bullet points it could send the wrong message: that everything is important and therefore nothing is important. If you still have quite the list, consider breaking the bullet points down into categories to further emphasize key skill sets. Be sure to be consistent with each position in your formatting.


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Is the most important information listed first? For each section of your resume, and the resume as a whole, you want to list the most important information first. If your education or licensure is most important to the prospective employer, list it before your experience. More often than not your title is more important than the company for whom you worked; therefore use this order: Title, Company, Time Frame. Move highlighted skills from the being buried at bottom of your resume to the top.


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Does it look like everyone else? You are not like everyone else, so why should your resume look like every other resume? Human beings are naturally drawn to things that attract our attention - it is the shiny object syndrome. Get a little creative in your letterhead and design, but don't go overboard. Remember, too much fluff can translate to the reader as lack of substance. Have a nice balance of verbiage and white space. Make it easy for the reader to read.


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The big question: one page or two? There is no right answer, it depends on the preference of the person reading your resume, so you have a 50/50 shot of being right. However, more important than length is being able to answer yes to three questions: did you state what position you are applying for, did you demonstrate your qualifications and can the reader find and understand the information easily? It is better to have a two page resume that is clean, clear and welcoming to read rather than a resume in which everything has been crammed onto one page in a tiny font and no white space.


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Did you key in on keywords? It has been noted that more than 90 percent of resumes are searched for position specific keywords. If you don't have them, you won't make the cut. Just as important as having keywords is using them correctly. Do not try to fool an automated reader by throwing in keywords everywhere. Utilize them in your opening statement, branding statement, areas of expertise and in job descriptions. Within the job descriptions, use them in context to let the reader know not only do you can talk the talk, you also walk the walk. Search open positions and job descriptions to deepen your pool of keywords.


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Did you mention references? There is no need to put the statement "Reference available upon request" on your resume (although this was a staple in resume writing some time ago). Employers assume if they ask you for references, you will provide them; therefore, this is wasted space on your resume. This also means you should never list them on your resume; nor should you send your reference list with your resume. Again, when they ask, you will provide.

We hope you have found this information helpful!

For a free review of your resume, please email us a copy, in confidence, to
Resumes@CareerPolish.com