

**Selling Yourself on Paper**  
The Real Skinny on Resumes  
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Thinking about updating your resume? Are you confused as to what your resume should look like? Why are there so many hard core, steadfast rules to follow? As a professional recruiter and career coach for the past 14 years, I have reviewed, edited and created thousands of resumes. One thing I've learned over the years is that everyone has an opinion as to what your resume should look like.

I believe a lot of the decisions you will make will be dependent on what you want your resume to do for you. Do you want to change careers? Are you looking for a new opportunity in the same industry? Do you want to move into management with a new employer? Once you determine the goal for your resume, I suggest the following options for resume formats.

### **The Chronological Resume**

This is the traditional resume that starts with your most recent (or current) position and works backward listing your entry level or early work experience. Employers only care about the last 15 years. After that, they figure you can't remember much about past positions or the people you worked with will no longer be at the organization. This style is the most popular and works great if you plan to stay in your industry or career because it shows the depth of your experience.

### **The Functional Resume**

This type of resume highlights three or four of your strengths/talents that act as functional headers. Your experience will be written as accomplishment statements highlighted with a bullet point below the appropriate header (see last week's article for examples). Chronological work experience (name of employer, title and dates) will be at the end of the resume or most likely on the second page, which forces the reader to focus on what skills you bring to the table. This style is great if you plan to switch careers or industries because the emphasis is on what you can do, not where you have been. *Warning: Not all human resource (HR) professionals like to read this style; they think you're trying to hide something.*

### **The Combination Resume**

This resume is a combination of both the chronological and functional styles. Each employer experience (job you've held) is listed chronologically. You then put three or four functional headers with the accomplishment statements (bullet points) under the appropriate header. This resume style works great if you have had long-term employment (five or more years) with your current and/or last employer.

Resume length is another bone of contention. I believe one page is appropriate for new graduates, those with fewer than five years experience or if someone has worked for only one employer. Two page resumes are fine for people with more than five years experience or anyone in management positions.

One and a half page resumes are not a good idea since it looks incomplete. In this situation it is best to cut it down to one page. Three or more pages are never advised except for curriculum vitae (CVs) needed for academic positions where a list of publications are expected.

If you require a two-page resume, make sure you put a header at the top of the second page that has your name and page number. I have seen hundreds of unidentifiable second pages floating among piles of resumes on someone's desk, with no idea who the second page belongs to. It should look like this example:

Sarah T. Michel

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It is never advised to staple the pages of your resume together, however, using a paper clip is acceptable. Also, use an easy to read font like Times Roman, and keep the type size no smaller than 10 points. The resume will be easy to read and will stay intact if e-mailed (next week's article will be on the do's and don'ts of e-mailing resumes and finding a job on the Internet).

Always have someone proof read your resume. Misspelled words and grammatical errors are unacceptable, and will ensure your resume is tossed aside. Print it on a high-count (resume quality) paper; do not use regular copy paper. I recommend using ivory, cream or white paper. Stay away from colored or fancy printed paper. It does not copy well and looks unprofessional. You should always snail mail a hardcopy to the prospective employer, even if you plan to e-mail your resume.

Remember your resume is what most people look at first to decide whether or not to grant you an interview. Make sure it represents you well and accomplishes the career goal that you set out to meet.