



10 Ways to Get Your Résumé Noticed

If you've been sending out résumés without any response, here are 10 ways to get your résumé noticed:

1. Start from scratch

A new year means a new résumé. Even though it might not sound like fun to rewrite your whole résumé (it probably won't be), give it a try. Obviously, if you didn't get any bites last year, something was a little off with your current résumé. Rearrange some sections, try a different format and use a different font. Just switch things up a little bit and see what happens.

2. Use a different format

Many job seekers don't realize that there are different formats to use when writing a résumé. The most common form is chronological, which lists each job you've had in reverse sequential order, so you start with your most recent job. This form doesn't work for all people, though. For example, if you've done a lot of job hopping in recent years or if you haven't had a job in a long time, a functional résumé is a better option.

A functional résumé focuses on your skills versus your work experience. For this, you would list a pertinent skill for the job to which you're applying, followed by a list of accomplishments that demonstrate that skill. If you don't have relevant skills or a strong work history, you could use a combination résumé, which combines elements of both a functional and a chronological format.

For a combination résumé, you should list your applicable skills and the accomplishments that demonstrate each one. Below that, you'll list your work history, starting with your most current job and working backward, but you won't list your job description. Doing this allows you the chance to play up your skills while proving your solid work history.

3. Ditch the empty words and vague phrases

Many job seekers fall prey to a common mistake that irks most employers: using cliché keywords. In a 2009 CareerBuilder survey, employers cited these common phrases as overused and often ignored by hiring managers:

- People person: 39 percent
- Go-getter: 38 percent
- Team player: 33 percent
- Hard-working: 29 percent
- Multitasker: 28 percent

- Self-starter: 27 percent
- Results- or goal-oriented: 22 percent

These words are just empty fillers that don't say anything about your achievements. For an [accountant](#) position, for example, keywords might include "[accounts payable](#)" or "month-end reporting" -- words that actually say something about what you can do. Look over your résumé and find where you have listed generic qualities about yourself and replace them with keywords that match the job to which you are applying.

4. Make your achievements stand out

Many job seekers list their job duties on their résumés, but not their accomplishments. Although your past duties are important, employers care more about your ability to produce results. Try separating your daily functions from your achievements by first listing your job duties in a paragraph format, and then incorporating a bulleted area below that is titled "key accomplishments" to list your successes.

5. Quantify your accomplishments

Applicants often don't know the difference between quantifying results and just stating a job responsibility. A job responsibility is something that you do on a daily basis; a quantified achievement is the result of that responsibility. By quantifying results, you show employers what you can actually do for them. So, if your current résumé is a block of words and you don't have one number in there, whether it's dollars, percentages or comparative numbers, you need to make some revisions.

6. Include a summary or objective

Including a summary on your résumé is one of those steps that many job seekers forget to take -- and if they do remember, they usually include the wrong information. Employers want to know if you're a good fit for their organization, so writing something like, "To gain experience in X industry," doesn't say much about you or what you can do for the employer. Your career summary should portray your experience and emphasize how it will help the prospective employer. It should be specific and include explicit industry-related functions, quantifiable achievements or your areas of expertise.

7. Fill in the gaps

Most people will tell you to wait to explain any gaps in your work history until you get to the interview. But there's a good chance that you won't get that opportunity if there are gaps in the first place. If, for example, you were laid off at the beginning or height of the recession and are still unemployed, try using the functional résumé format we explained earlier. Or, if you feel comfortable doing so, explain what you were doing during lapses between jobs. The employer will know you aren't trying to hide a sketchy past.

8. Keep it simple

How many times do we have to tell you? Do not, by any means, format your résumé with crazy fonts or colors or print it on fluorescent paper. Find an uncommon, yet attractive and simple layout to catch the employer's eye, instead of his wastebasket.

9. Double-check for the basics

Silly as it sounds, many people get so caught up in formatting and proofreading that they don't check for the most basic information, such as an e-mail address, phone number and permanent address. Double-check that your résumé has this information -- none of your hard work will pay off if no one can get ahold of you.

10. Check for consistency

Take a look over last year's résumé and make sure there are no inconsistencies. If you decide to include periods at the end of your sentences, for example, make sure they are at the end of each one. If you chose to list your job duties, followed by an accomplishment in that duty, make sure you do so throughout your résumé. Use consistent fonts, sizes, bullets and other formatting options. Employers will notice your attention to detail and assume your work quality is of the same standard.