



# DOWN AND DIRTY RESUME GUIDE

From the Hiring Manager's point of view...

Please ME or you won't even get up to bat

## Down and Dirty Resume Guide

The first step to writing a resume does not involve the resume at all. It involves you and your spouse if you have one, deciding on your life goals for the next 20 to 30 years of your life. You cannot write an effective resume unless you complete this step. Let me repeat that because it is so important. You cannot write an effective resume unless you complete this step.

The reason this is so important is that you need to write a job objective at the very top of your resume. There is no such thing as a generalized resume if you are really looking for a job. Your resume needs to be targeted to a specific job and that is your objective. Read this job objective aloud and see how pathetic it sounds:

“Seeking a responsible position of gradually increasing authority where my ever-expanding variety of management skills and boundless enthusiasm will contribute in a positive way to the bottom line of a forward-thinking and progressive company clearly positioned in a growth industry....blah, blah, blah”

This person will take any job he can get. Don't do this. It is demeaning and it makes me angry. I will throw this resume in the trash. Now try reading this job objective:

“Seeking position as accountant for Landon Corporation”

That's pretty specific. It's also not that hard to write but it is oh-so effective when it passes in front of the HR manager's eyes. Your job objective tells that person what you want to do for that company. The rest of your resume only includes information that is germane to that job objective.

For instance, if you are writing a resume for a position as an accountant, why in the world would you include a statement in the main body that tells in detail about your experience as a car body repairman? If you want a job as a car body repairman, why would you mention your experience as a newspaper print operator? Some things don't go together so stop forcing it.

Now, gather up job descriptions, annual evaluations, descriptions of awards and the details of what you did to receive them, training records, transcripts, course completion certificates, and on a sheet of paper write hero statements describing all the other things that you have done which no one else wrote down. These are the private victories that everyone has in those warm spots in their memory. Sort all this information into little piles here and there on a tabletop. Now all you need is a format.

Don't get too panicky about the particular format. If you did step one correctly, the rest of this is mere mechanics. Pick a chronological format if you can. It will show a progression from entry level jobs up through the ranks. If you have gaps in your employment, find a format model for a functional resume. Guess where the titles come from for all the functions....they come right off the job announcement. For every job you apply for using a functional resume, you will need to perform significant editing to

change from one set of functions to another from the next job announcement. Use the chronological format if you can.

Now sort your hero statements from the stacks of information you gathered up, pick out those statements that apply to that job objective, and type them into the computer in the same format as your model.

## Rules

1. Do not use resume-writing software. If for some reason you are asked to put it online as an attachment to an e-mail as part of the application process, it will not be readable at the other end unless they coincidentally happen to have that same software. This is not likely.
2. Don't use resume templates from word-processor software. The template will define the format, font, and size and you won't be able to change it. When you get to the end, if one or two lines spill off to a second page, you'll be stuck with it.
3. Do use a common word processor program like MS Word or WordPerfect. Open up a new, blank document and use the tabs and centering/left-justify switch to build your format. Set the tabs at the beginning and leave them alone. Don't change in the middle of the page or the document will start to act weird.
4. You are limited to ONE PAGE ONLY. Of a thousand resumes I have reviewed over the last 4 years, I have only allowed 2 go to a second page. If you do go to a second page, it must be two FULL pages. If you cannot completely fill two pages, then you must cut back to one page only. If you cannot cut it down to one page, then you better not claim that you are an effective communicator or I will tear up your resume and throw it away.
5. Use action verbs and predicate. Do not say you were responsible for anything. I only care about whether or not you actually did it. Use the "I" test described later to check the tense and usage of your action verbs. Tense and person must be correct.
6. Don't lie. You were not solely responsible for a 60 Gajillion dollar military aircraft. If you were, then you have stars on your shoulder and we would be handling this resume thing quite differently than giving you a down and dirty sheet. I don't want to hear the value of the equipment you worked on. That's EPR fodder and I just won't tolerate it.
7. Do not waste my time by telling me what you want to say. Write what I want to see. You will find the list of things I want to see on the job announcement. I did not write those experience requirements to amuse myself. That is what I want to see on resumes of the applicants. If I don't see it, I will throw your resume in the trash. You're not what I am looking for.
8. Form follows function. The function of your resume is to convince me to call you in for an interview for a particular job. Format your resume to convince me to do that using proper grammar, spelling, and facts that are pertinent to only that particular position.

“I” test:

“Repairs aircraft jet engines”

Read that sentence with the word “I” in front of it. Sounds stupid, right? Now try these:

“Repaired aircraft jet engines”

“Entered repair data into Air Force proprietary computer database”

“Inserted intravenous drip lines”

Now the “I” test sounds a lot better.

### Rule of thirds

The first one third of your resume tells me who you are, what you want to do for my company, and what makes you think you can do it. That means you put in the contact information at the top, your short and concise job objective next, and finally a *Summary of Qualifications* that includes about 4 bullets that summarize everything in the remainder of your resume. When I pick up your resume, you get about a seven second read. That will get me through the first one third of the page. If I don’t find what I want, you’re put aside and I go on to the next. There is no mercy here. I pull ten resumes out of a pile of 300 or so. The rest get dumped unceremoniously into the waste basket.

The other two thirds of the page back up what you just wrote in the Summary. This is where you list chronologically (or functionally) all the experience that I am looking for as stated in the job announcement and description of duties. You also need to list the dates when you performed these heroic deeds and put them in the correct order with the most recent experience at the top and the oldest at the bottom.

If you got through the first glance, your resume is put into a much smaller pile and I will read all of this remaining detail later, over a cup of coffee when I can relax and be a bit more thorough. If you made it this far, I could still wad your resume up into a little ball and toss it if you bore me with a lot of junk that I don’t want to hear about (refer back to rule 7). This is the section where you need to convince me to call you in for an interview. So make it thorough, concise, and interesting.

Remember, the resume does not get you the job. The resume gets you the interview. The interview gets you the job.

Last but not least, don’t end your resume with the phrase “References available upon request”. Of course they are. Ending your resume with this statement tells me you did not have quite enough experience to fill a complete page so you just put that in for filler. If I have you in for an interview and ask for your references, it is understood that you will give them to me there in the interview (so have them ready).

Remember above all, I am the undisputed master of my environment. I hire and I fire personnel. If you don’t want to play by my rules, then play somewhere else. But if you can respect me and my domain by writing a nice, concise resume, then maybe we can work something out to give you that dream job.