

RESUME ESSENTIALS CHECKLIST

Created by Lavonia, Director of Talent Acquisition with 25+ years of experience

FORMAT & STRUCTURE

Must-Have Elements

- ☐ Contact information at the top (name, phone, email, LinkedIn URL)
- ☐ Professional summary/profile statement (3-5 lines maximum)
- ☐ Skills section with relevant technical and soft skills
- ☐ Work experience with company names, locations, and dates
- ☐ Education section with degrees, institution names, and graduation dates
- ☐ Consistent formatting throughout (fonts, spacing, bullet style)

ATS Compatibility

- ☐ Simple, standard fonts (Arial, Calibri, Times New Roman)
- ☐ Standard section headings (Experience, Education, Skills)
- ☐ Limited use of tables, text boxes, headers/footers, and graphics
- ☐ File saved as .docx or .pdf (check job posting for preference)
- ☐ Filename includes your name (e.g., "JohnSmith_Resume.pdf")

CONTENT QUALITY

Work Experience Section

- ☐ Job titles, company names, and dates clearly displayed
- ☐ Accomplishments emphasized over responsibilities
- ☐ Quantifiable achievements with metrics when possible
- ☐ Action verbs at the beginning of bullet points
- ☐ Tailored to highlight experiences relevant to target role
- ☐ Proper tense (present for current role, past for previous roles)

Bullet Point Formula

- ☐ Action Verb + Task + Result/Impact
- ☐ Specific numbers and percentages to demonstrate impact
- ☐ 4-6 bullet points for recent/relevant roles (fewer for older positions)
- ☐ No personal pronouns (I, me, my)

Professional Summary

- ☐ Concise overview of your professional identity (3-5 lines)
- ☐ Highlights years of experience, relevant skills, and value proposition
- ☐ Tailored to the specific role you're applying for
- ☐ Free of generic statements that could apply to anyone

COMMON MISTAKES TO AVOID

- ☐ Typos, grammatical errors, or inconsistent formatting
- ☐ Including personal information (age, marital status, photo)
- ☐ Using generic objective statements
- ☐ Listing job duties without accomplishments
- ☐ Including irrelevant work experience
- ☐ Exceeding 2 pages (for most professionals)

TAILORING YOUR RESUME

- ☐ Analyze the job description for key requirements and skills
- ☐ Incorporate relevant keywords naturally throughout your resume
- ☐ Rearrange or emphasize experiences most relevant to the position
- ☐ Customize your professional summary for each application
- ☐ Adjust skills section to highlight qualifications mentioned in job posting

BEFORE SUBMITTING

- ☐ Proofread multiple times (and have someone else review it too)
 - ☐ Check that all dates are accurate and consistent
 - ☐ Ensure contact information is current and professional
 - ☐ Verify that links (LinkedIn, portfolio) are working
 - ☐ Remove any information that isn't enhancing your application
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WEAK VS. STRONG BULLET POINTS: BEFORE & AFTER

WEAK: *"Responsible for managing a team"*

STRONG: *"Led a cross-functional team of 8 professionals, improving project delivery times by 27% while reducing costs by \$45K annually"*

WEAK: *"Handled customer service and resolved issues"*

STRONG: *"Resolved an average of 45 customer inquiries daily with a 97% satisfaction rate, recovering \$120K in potential lost revenue through effective problem-solving"*

WEAK: *"Participated in recruitment activities"*

STRONG: *"Developed and implemented structured interview process that reduced time-to-hire by 15 days and improved new hire retention by 32%"*

Remember: Your resume is your professional marketing document. Every element should serve the purpose of showing why you're the ideal candidate for the specific role you're targeting.

Need more personalized guidance? Check out my professional resume review services!