**Test Your Resume Knowledge Worksheet**

The resume is the most important document you will create in your search campaign. It is your written advertisement that illustrates your experience, skills, and career accomplishments to a hiring company. Before we begin, let’s see how much you know about the use of resumes in a job search. The answers, which are

shown on the next page, may surprise you.

**Resume Knowledge Questions**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  | True | False |
| 1. | The purpose of a resume is to share your employment history in a snapshot format. |  |  |
| 2. | Resumes should be only one page, whenever possible. |  |  |
| 3. | Potential employers typically read resumes thoroughly the first time. |  |  |
| 4. | A functional resume, one that lists groups of skills and achievements with little emphasis on work history, should be avoided since it is rarely used and because a potential employer might view it with some skepticism. |  |  |
| 5. | A resume should always contain an objective statement. |  |  |
| 6. | An effective resume highlights pertinent achievements. |  |  |
| 7. | It is okay to indicate that you are out of work on a resume. |  |  |
| 8. | One version of a resume is all that job seekers will need in their campaign. |  |  |
| 9. | You should list your complete employment history in full detail. |  |  |
| 10. | You should include all certifications and licenses you have had during your career. |  |  |
| 11. | Dates should always be provided when listing formal education. |  |  |
| 12. | Personal information should be omitted from a resume. |  |  |
| 13. | Special interests and hobbies can be included on a resume. |  |  |
| 14. | References should be added to the bottom of a resume. |  |  |
| 15. | You will stand a better chance of being granted an interview if you are creative with your resume paper selection. |  |  |
| 16. | You should develop an Applicant Tracking System (ATS) resume for use on the Internet. |  |  |
| 17. | It is a good idea to test-market your resume before distributing it to a large audience. |  |  |

**Resume Knowledge Answers**

1. **The purpose of a resume is to share your employment history in a snapshot format:**

**True:** A resume serves as a way for you to state your experience, qualifications, skills, and career accomplishments to a potential employer. However, it needs to be to the point and bring out the most significant highlights. A resume is intended to open the door to an interview opportunity, and not to act as a stand-alone method for obtaining a position. Today, most employers are looking for the best fit in a candidate, and personality traits are difficult to portray in a one-dimensional piece of paper. Leave the details for the interview.

1. **Resumes should only be one page whenever possible.**

**False:** Many job seekers fall into the trap of thinking that they must squeeze all of their career history into a one-page document. This results in important omissions of accomplishments or poor layout choices such as small fonts or extending type beyond normal margins. If you can effectively summarize your career history in one page, great! If not, it is certainly okay to go to two pages. If your resume extends beyond two, you may want to seek areas you can trim it. Most employers are only interested in your career history covering the last ten to fifteen years.

1. **Potential employers typically read resumes thoroughly the first time.**

**False:** You will be lucky if your resume gets more than thirty to sixty seconds of reader attention, the first time around. With the massive volume of job seekers today, human resources professionals must go through a tremendous number of resumes per day. Many now rely on computer programs to screen resumes to find a match for the opportunities they are trying to fill.

1. **A functional resume, one that lists groups of skills and achievements with little emphasis on work history, should be avoided since it is rarely used and because a potential employer might view it with some skepticism.**

**False:** A functional resume can be very effective for job seekers in the following categories: those with diverse backgrounds wanting to focus their searches in a specific area; those who want to completely change their careers, or those who have gaps in their employment histories. Functional resumes are sometimes met with skepticism because they make it more difficult to see actual career progression. Use a functional resume if it will work best for you, but be prepared to answer any questions that might arise in an interview.

1. **A resume should always contain an objective statement.**

**False:** Since your resume may only get a brief initial scan, why waste valuable space at the beginning of your resume with a statement about what you are looking for in a company? A better solution is to present the objective in the cover letter and replace this information on your resume with a powerful statement which presents a brief overview of your qualifications.

1. **An effective resume highlights pertinent achievements.**

**True:** A resume is your written advertisement to a company. It lists not only your employment history, but also career accomplishments and achievements. It is especially important to note any significant contributions you personally made that benefited your previous employers.

1. **It is okay to indicate that you are out of work on a resume.**

**True:** In today’s job market, most employers have moved beyond making assumptions or judgments about candidates based on whether or not they are currently employed. The market is in a constant state of change. Pick up any newspaper in a mid-to-large sized city and you will surely find an article about a corporate merger, acquisition, downsizing, or closure. This has generated a pool of highly experienced and qualified professionals, out of work and in the job market – a valuable resource that potential employers cannot overlook.

1. **One version of a resume is all that job seekers will need in their campaign.**

**False:** There are many circumstances in an individual’s job search, where that individual would benefit from having more than one version of a resume. What if you have been in a certain field for a number of years and want to branch out into a different direction? You might first create a chronological resume to match opportunities that are similar to your most recent position, and then create a second resume in a functional format that highlights transferable experiences and skills that would suit a new career path. In this manner, you can have some sense of security and a safety net as you explore alternatives.

1. **You should list your complete employment history in full detail.**

**False:** Your resume should only highlight in detail your employment history for the last ten to fifteen years. Beyond that time frame, it is not necessary to list every position and every company that you

have worked for since you obtained your Social Security card. Make sure that the resume stays

focused on experience and accomplishments that will make you a viable candidate for a current potential opportunity. Don’t waste a lot of valuable space on your resume with old, dated information.

1. **You should include all certifications and licenses you have had during your career.**

**False:** Current certifications and licenses are essential pieces of information in a resume,

especially if your area of expertise requires them to conduct your profession legally. However,

don’t include certifications or licenses that have expired.

1. **Dates should always be provided when listing formal education.**

**False:** This is a gray area. If you have received a degree within the last ten years, it is certainly appropriate and beneficial to include the year that you received the degree. However, if you obtained the degree over ten years ago, you may want to omit the date to keep the potential employer from using the information to eliminate you from consideration, based on your age.

1. **Personal information should be omitted from a resume.**

**True:** The Equal Employment Opportunity Act prohibits job discrimination on the basis of age, race, color, religion, sex, national origin, or disabilities. Therefore, it will be to your advantage to omit this type of information on your resume.

1. **Special interests and hobbies can be included on a resume.**

**True:** These items can be included if they are interesting, something out of the ordinary, and don’t cause your resume to go to three pages. This can be a great way to spark interest by showing that you are well rounded and may get your foot in the door for a potential opportunity. This same rule applies to Volunteer and/or Community Activities.

1. **References should be added to the bottom of the resume.**

**False:** References should not be included with an initial submission of a resume. Submission of your resume is only the first step in the hiring process. If you are granted an interview and do well, this would be the appropriate time for the employer to request your references. You should not offer them unless asked. In any case, the references should be provided in a professional, polished, stand-alone document, ready to distribute upon request. Avoid adding a statement to your resume that references are available. Employers already know this.

1. **You will stand a better chance of being granted an interview if you are creative with your resume paper selection.**

**False:** If you think that selecting neon colored paper will get your resume noticed in a large stack of resumes, you are correct, but you won’t get the kind of attention and respect you are really after. Unless you are in a creative field, stick to regular, white copy paper.

1. **You should develop an Applicant Tracking System (ATS) resume for use on the Internet.**

**True:** The Internet has had a significant impact on how employers and job seekers connect. Therefore, taking time to create an Internet friendly version of your resume is essential. [This LinkedIn article](https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/your-resume-ready-automated-screening-richard-poulin/) covers the importance and instructions to help you create an ATS resume. Generally, when applying for jobs on an online job board, you will attach or paste your ATS resume into the body of the resume submission section.

1. **It is a good idea to test-market your resume before distributing it to a large audience.**

**True:** Once your resume is completed to your satisfaction, you may want to share it with a close circle of personal and professional acquaintances to get their feedback. A resume can be a challenging document to create, because it makes us step back and “toot our own horn”, which many of us feel uncomfortable doing.

By soliciting feedback, you can enlist the help you need to make sure that you are sending the right message to potential employers. Some of the best feedback just might be from your former boss!

In any case, review your resume with a fine-toothed comb before distribution. Check for misspelled words, and errors in grammar or format. Employers are particularly tuned in to the initial impact that a resume presents. If it is obviously over-copied, hard to read, sloppy, and printed on bright pink paper, this reflects on you and the impression that this sort of resume makes with that prospective hiring professional is not one that will help you get the job. On the other hand, if your resume is concise, thorough, accurate, free of misspellings, and professionally formatted and presented, the hiring company will expect a professional and well- put-together candidate in an interview.