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How to write a summary of a resume

When applying for jobs, you want to take every chance you have to stand out from the crowd. Adding a resumé summary to the top of your resumé can help interviewers get a quick snapshot of who you are and why you'd be great in their team. But what if you're not sure how to write a resumé summary? In this article, you'll find a step-by-step guide of what to include, what to leave out, and how to nail your resumé summary so it lands you an interview.

What is a summary for a resumé? A resumé summary is a short statement at the top of a resumé that outlines key experiences, roles and achievements. Its purpose is to highlight at a glance why you're the ideal person for a specific job and what you bring to the table. It can often be confused with a career objective. What's the difference between a career objective and a resumé summary? A career objective outlines the future you're hoping to achieve, while a resumé summary is an overview of your career so far. Understanding your target audience

Before writing your resumé summary, you should first identify your target audience, i.e. who will be reading and vetting applications. Think about what role they're likely in, such as team leader or HR manager. Then consider what they may be looking for and what would stand out to them. Then, tailor your resumé summary to suit. For example, if a job ad implies the application will be going to a manager of a team or department, they will likely be looking for skills and experience, in addition to teamwork and communication skills. Meanwhile a HR manager or recruitment agent might have a checklist of technical skills that directly relate to the job. Key elements of a professional summary for resumé

With your target audience in mind, it's time to move onto the main elements of your resumé summary. Here are a few things to keep in mind: The length. Keep your professional summary short, clear and concise, ideally one to three sentences. The tone and style. The tone and style of your professional summary should be consistent and align with the rest of your application documents. The use of keywords. Your professional resumé summary should include keywords of the skills and experience you have that match those in the job ad. You can bold them to make them really stand out to the interviewer.

The structure. A resumé summary is typically one to three sentences outlining your key skills, experience and qualifications that align with the job ad. How to write a resumé summary

Here are some practical tips on how to write a resumé summary that will highlight your skills and catch the interviewer's eye. Start with a hook - a relevant qualification or unique skill - to capture the reader's attention. Highlight your key skills and achievements, matching them to the job description. Include metrics or data-driven evidence of your accomplishments, such as percentage increases in performance, sales figures or the number of people you managed. Showcase your unique value proposition - what you believe you can offer that no one else can. Ensure you have proofread your summary so it's free of spelling and grammatical errors.

Quick tip: Write your resumé summary in the first person ("I led a team of five" rather than "Your name! led a team of five".) In the rest of your resumé, omit pronouns altogether ("Led a team of five", "Increased sales by 23%").

Writing a resumé summary with no experience

If you're writing a resumé summary with no professional experience, you should focus on your soft skills and technical skills. You may have more than you think! Research the job you're applying for and see what additional skills may help you, outside of what's mentioned in the job ad. This could include things like computer proficiency, basic coding, customer service skills and more. Even if you're still in school, you'll likely still have teamwork and other soft skills you can mention. Resumé summary examples

To get you started, here are some resumé summary examples. Take note of the format: lead with the strongest statement, use specific data (where possible), include your most relevant skills, and be sure to personalise your summary before sending it to a potential employer.

Entry-level resumé summary ideal for a first job

I am a proactive and confident person looking for a casual customer-service position in Darwin. Through my studies I have developed strong communication and interpersonal skills. I am a people-person and eager to be in a role that allows me to help people every day.

Resumé summary for recent graduates

Data-focused computer science and business graduate with experience in app development and marketing. My first project app surpassed 2,000 downloads in 30 days, and I'm excited to build off this achievement and further develop my skills with a business that prioritises agile development and app innovation. Resumé summary for experienced applicant

Accomplished in-house marketing director with a proven track record of executing successful results-driven campaign strategies. Have led multiple regional and global campaigns in my 12 years in the automotive industry. Tailoring your resumé summary to different industries

Resumé summaries can easily be adapted to suit any industry or job. It's all about focusing on your key skills and what you can bring to the role. You can use these personal summary resumé examples as ideas for your own, swapping out the titles and experiences as you need.

Resumé summary for a teacher

Dedicated and passionate educator with over 5 years in early-years development, focused on fostering a positive and inclusive learning environment. Proven expertise in curriculum development and pioneering new teaching methods for students with learning challenges. Career summary for a tradesperson

Multi-skilled tradesperson with 12 years of experience in carpentry, project management and commercial fit outs. I have completed more than 120 projects on time and on budget, have mentored several apprentices and have supervised teams on multiple job sites. Professional summary for a customer service person

I am a results-oriented customer service professional with more than three years in big box retail. Over the past year, I have been awarded staff member of the month twice, and have more than 20 mentions in Google reviews for providing outstanding customer support.

Tips for optimising your resumé summary for Applicant Tracking Systems (ATS)

Some organisations will use an ATS (or Applicant Tracking System) to help them manage the hiring process more efficiently. ATS software collects information from applications and filters them for the most relevant applicants. From there, employers will often take the filtered piles and begin their own screening. As a job applicant, you can optimise your resumé for ATS. Some top ways to optimise your application include:

Use standard fonts (such as Arial) to ensure your resumé is easy for the software to read. Use clean formatting with no charts, tables or graphics, as this may impair the ATS from properly reading your application. Use an ATS-friendly template. Include keywords in your resumé that match the job ad. Stick to standard heading names, like Work Experience, Education and Skills to ensure your information is read correctly.

Proofread your resumé, as ATS may not be able to read typos, missing crucial information. A business likely uses an ATS if its careers page has you fill out a series of forms, the job application has a long URL or it is a very large corporation. The dos and don'ts of resumé summary writing

By now, you should know the basics of writing your career summary, but these quick dos and don'ts of resumé writing can help make sure you get every detail right.

Best practices for writing a resumé summary

Writing a good resumé summary helps capture the attention of employers. Here are some best practices to keep in mind. Keep it clear and concise. Only include your key skills, qualifications and experience. Start with a strong statement. Your opening sentence should hook the reader by showing how you're a good match for the role. Quantify achievements. Use specific data, examples of how you have used your skills and knowledge, and what results you achieved. Include keywords. The skills and experience in your career summary should reflect those mentioned in the job ad. Most importantly, don't overthink it. If you had to sum up your entire career in a sentence or two, what would you say? How would you highlight your skills and achievements? That should give you a good idea of what to write. Common mistakes to avoid when writing a resumé summary

Some top mistakes to avoid when writing a career summary for your resumé include:

Being too general. Your summary should be specific to your skills and how you've used them in the past. Being too long. Remember, a resumé summary should only be one to three sentences long. It's a summary, not a cover letter. Lack of personalisation. Every resumé summary should be personalised to the job ad and industry. Using exaggerated language. Avoid exaggerating your skills and accomplishments - you may need to qualify your skills in a job interview (and eventually in the job role). Not proofreading. Mistakes in your resumé are the biggest giveaway that you lack attention to detail, so proof, proof and proof again! Remember: your resumé summary is often the first impression a potential employer has of you, so it's crucial to make it impactful and tailored to the specific job you're applying for. With employers and hiring managers filtering through multiple resúmes, a well-written resumé summary is the thing that could make you stand out.

The most effective resumé summaries should somewhat mirror the job ad, while highlighting specific career achievements and data that reinforce why you're the perfect fit. It should also be free of errors, clearly formatted and optimised for ATS. If you've aligned your summary with the job ad, you've given yourself an even better chance of getting a callback.

FAQs

What is the ideal length of a resumé summary? The ideal resumé summary should be one to three sentences. It's a snapshot of who you are and what you have to offer. Make sure to keep it concise, with only relevant information, enticing the employer to read your full application. Should I include my career objective in my resumé summary? Adding a career objective to your resumé is a personal preference and is not required. But using an objective statement can help immediately draw attention to specific skills, experience or other credentials that will help you stand out from the crowd. It can also be beneficial if you need to address a career change, location change or gaps in your resumé.

How do I tailor my resumé summary to different job postings? To tailor a resumé summary to different job postings, read the job ad carefully and review your resumé to ensure you are highlighting the desired skills and experience. These skills, qualifications and expertise should be front and centre, and quick to absorb for the reader. Can I use the same resumé summary for different job applications? You should ideally have a different resumé summary for different job applications. Read the job ad carefully and align your skills and experience with the qualities they are looking for, to help you come across as the perfect candidate.

How do I make my resumé summary stand out from the competition? Some top ways to help your resumé summary stand out from the competition include:

Personalise your summary to the job ad

Include impressive data

Match your skills and experience closely to those mentioned in the job description

Keep it concise - less than three sentences

Ensuring it is free of errors

Having a highly compelling resume summary can increase the chances that the recruiter will love to read your resume. If you are writing a resume for a job, you need to begin it with a punchy summary to draw in the recruiter into the body of the resume. The resume summary is a few statements usually in 3 to 4 lines that highlight your work experience and major achievements in roles that you have handled. It serves to showcase your areas of strength or expertise right from the start of the resume to encourage the recruiter to read the entire resume. This article will guide you on how to write an effective summary for your resume, and also show you some good resume summary examples covering various industries.

How to Write an Effective Resume Summary

A resume summary is suitable for people with cognate work experience. This includes graduates, senior executives, intermediate-level employees, etc. as long as you have some practical experience relevant for success on the job. How to Make a Great Resume Summary for any Position

A resume is effective if it has the capacity to get the hiring manager look forward to meeting you, or it can pass the ATS software screening used by many multi-national organizations and fortune 500 companies to screen applicants'. To write an effective resume summary, first start by studying the description of the published job, then highlight the key words in the summary in few lines, such as responsibilities and qualifications or requirements associated with the role. This implies that your resume summary cannot be generic but must always be tailored to the job you are vying for. To write a great resume summary, start with a description of yourself using strong adjectives in few words; mention your present job title and experience, state how you will help the recruiter achieve their goals, and provide information on your achievements in your current employment to prove that you can deliver on your promise. But, remember that the adjectives, key words, and how to achieve the goals of the employer should emanate from the job description. That way, your resume will pass both an ATS software screening and scrutiny by a hiring manager. To aid your learning of how to create effective summary for your resume, here are some summary examples from several careers to guide you: 20 Best Resume Summary Examples you can apply

Self-motivated Communication Manager with sound initiative and 7 years of experience providing media content on the sports industry. Looking to assist TSL with proficient writing and IT expertise in Adobe Creative Cloud software to promote the brand on various social media platforms. At ABC, increased brand awareness by 70% and reduced promotion expense by 30%. Reliable and licensed Personal Vehicle Package Driver with 3 years of experience. Eager to support UPS in providing prompt delivery services of personal packages. At TSL, had 100% compliance record to company's appearance policy. No at fault accidents within the last three years, and No moving violations in the last 12 months. Goal-oriented IT Specialist with 5 years of experience. Seeking to utilize exceptional troubleshooting and debugging skills and advanced skills in various IT systems to support the Department of Navy. At 3CI, learnt 3 new technologies within 6months and consistently contributed to team projects. Guaranteed a secure IT Systems and applications by 90%. Experienced HR professional looking to support ABC Company with expertise in designing and executing HR strategy in support of the strategic direction of the organization. In SSM Health, increased productivity by 50% and reduced turnover by 75 % within 2 years, utilizing strong technological aptitude, critical evaluation, project management, and team-building skills. Resourceful Marketing Coordinator with 8 years of experience. Seeking to support UPS in developing effective digital marketing plans. In ABC, developed skill set covering e-commerce, content generation, and SEO website optimization. Consistently maintained ABC's website as top 10 sites on Google in the last 3 years, and increased e-commerce sales revenue by 70%. Detail-oriented and tech savvy Admin Manager, looking to utilize 5 years of experience, strong prioritization, and problem-solving skills, decision-making, and negotiation skills to ensure smooth office operations for TSL. At ABC Inc. introduced 5 sources of office supplies, reduced operations cost by 50%, and reduced employee conflict by 90% in 3 months. Meticulously detailed Biomedical Life Scientist with Master's degree in Biology and 7 years of experience. Seeks to leverage a solid science background and excellent scientific writing and time management skills to support Lieder. In ABC Inc. utilized data management tools to improve research outcomes. Detail and quality-oriented Assembly Worker with 3 years of experience working in a team-oriented and fast paced environment. Seeks to boost AAM's productivity level by utilizing solid technical skills. Awarded best staff consecutively for 2 years for consistently meeting production targets. Energetic Sales Manager with 5 years of technical sales experience. Seeks to leverage on solid sales background to develop strategies that will boost sales for ABC Company. Awarded staff of the year 3 consecutive times for exceeding sales target. At SSM, motivated the sales team to achieve 50% increase in sales and 30 % increase in repeat customers. Result-oriented Scheduler with 3 years of experience scheduling industrial construction projects. Seeks to boost IP's' productivity by expert knowledge of scheduling software, standard cost control tools and exceptional collaborative and time management skills. At ABC, increased project completion rate by 98.7% and data accuracy by 95%. Intellectually curious and detail-oriented Programmer with 3 years of software development experience. Seeks to assist ABC solve clients' business problems by utilizing broad knowledge of programming, Software Engineering Lifecycle, programming languages, and Data Management. At ABC, provided efficient data solutions within 3 months of joining the company. Seasoned Business Analyst with a Master's degree in Computer Science and 10 years of experience. Eager to join ABC Inc. to utilize first-class managerial and analytical skills in support of warehouse operations. In TSL Inc, improved warehouse profitability by 40% and reduced logistics cost by 30%. Highly driven Data Analyst with strong initiative and 7 years of experience analyzing business processes. Looking to leverage visualization and analytical skills to improve sales and drive growth at Trace3 Inc. At ABC, reduced operating cost by 40% and identified a bottleneck that saved the organization \$1,000,000. Finance and Operations Manager with strong financial and administrative skills, and 7 years of experience. Desire to leverage strong finance background, budgeting, planning, and managerial expertise to achieve operational excellence for ABC Inc. At CBC Inc. eliminated low margin transactions, boosted productivity by 30%, and improved revenue by 45 %. Detail-oriented and discreet Senior CPA with proven account reconciliation and IT expertise and 7 years of experience, eager to join ABC Inc. In previous employment, improved TSL's record accuracy by 95%, and improved cloud computing practices saving the company 100 hours monthly. Energetic and outgoing Sales Officer with 2 years of experience providing sales consultation and solutions to customers independently or in teams, seeks to support ABC in providing excellent customer service by recommending storage solutions to meet their needs through friendly interaction. At ABC, expanded business by 70% and positive feedback by 60%. Result-oriented and exceptionally organized Digital Marketing Specialist with 6+ years of experience. Proficient in developing new businesses and creating well-targeted sales pitch. Seeks to boost ABC's KPIs using digital marketing strategies. At HealthPlus, increased sales revenue by 60%, expanded business by 70%, and slashed promotion cost by 50%. Exceptionally creative Data Scientist with superb communication skills and 5+ years of experience utilizing Statistical Modeling and Machine Learning Techniques. Seeks to create data collection models that generate insight for ABC. In TSL inc. developed models that explained business concepts, and developed algorithms and production-grade codes. Detail-oriented and energetic Housekeeping Supervisor with 7 years of experience. Eager to support ABC Hotels in maintaining the highest standards of cleanliness and Hygiene. In Rose Hotels, supervised 10 housekeeping staff, contributed to improving customer experiences and boosted positive customer reviews by 50%. Exceptionally organized Warehouse Associate with Bachelor's degree in Business Administration and 3 years of experience. Desire to join Trace3 Inc. to improve warehouse processes and top KPIs. In previous roles, improved efficiency by 70% and reduced loading time by 21 hours weekly. A resume summary allows you to present your competence and achievement at the top of the resume page in a way that the hiring manager can tell your worth from reading the first lines of your resume. To make it easy for you to learn how to make a great summary for your resume, we have provided 20 examples on different career paths that you can use to create yours. However, you must ensure to tailor your resume summary to the specific job you are applying for. See all tests