

RECHARGE YOUR RESUME

*How to maximize each section to stand out
and get noticed (in a good way)*



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Over the years, I have reviewed thousands of resumes. I have also personally spent nearly \$4,000 on resume consultant services over the course of my career. Let me share what I have learned with you so you don't have to spend the time or the money making your resume stand out from the pack.

RESUME RULES

The goal of the resume is to get you an interview for a specific job. Period.

You have about six to 20 seconds to capture a recruiting manager's attention. Let's take a look at the essential elements of a resume and how to maximize each section to ensure you are getting noticed. I will also add in some **Pro Tips!** along the way!

The first step is to create a "resume master" with all relevant elements.

ELEMENTS OF A RESUME

1. Name and Contact Information (including a LinkedIn custom URL)
2. Branding Statement (optional, but strongly recommended)
3. Professional Summary/Career Profile
4. Core Competencies/Areas of Expertise
5. Experience
6. Education
7. Certifications
8. Affiliations/Professional Organizations

Here's how to make each of these elements stand out (in a good way!).

1. NAME AND CONTACT INFORMATION

Short and sweet...

Don't take up valuable space by making this section overly large or adding lots of white space. Make sure your email is a professional and current address, such as GMail. Don't use AOL or Hotmail email addresses, as these may flag you as out-of-date.

Pro Tip!

Make sure this information is repeated on every page of your resume.

If you are interested in remote work or relocation, indicate that instead of or in addition to your city and state. Some options include:

- Available to relocate anywhere in the United States
- Available for remote opportunities
- Phoenix, AZ and remote opportunities

Some applicant tracking systems are set up to show distance from the work location, so if you are outside of the radius, you might not be considered unless you flag it in a way to show you are open to remote or relocation options.

[See example on pg 9.](#)

2. BRANDING STATEMENT

The secret sauce...

You may have noticed I have not included an Objective Statement on the above list. Objective Statements are out-of-date. Companies are looking for what you can do for them, not whether or not they are meeting your objectives.

What is more relevant today and differentiates you from other candidates is a Branding Statement. A Branding Statement tells what you offer that is not limited by a job title. Think of this as the first sentence of your "elevator pitch."

Examples of strong Branding Statements include:

- Human Resources and Organizational Development Executive with a strategic approach to human capital management
- Results-driven talent management leader
- Learning and development leader with progressive experience spearheading learning initiatives in the hospitality industry

[See example on pg 9.](#)

Pro Tip!

Use your Branding Statement on LinkedIn in the headline section of your profile.

3. PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY/CAREER PROFILE

Your hook...

This is where you get them excited about you! The career profile or professional summary allows you to control the narrative about the value you add.

This can be framed as a short paragraph or bulleted list of strengths. These are the things that go beyond specific job experience and illustrate who you are. While a paragraph is preferred, a bulleted list may be more appropriate if you have held a variety of jobs and the items don't fit together in a cohesive, streamlined paragraph.

For your resume master, create a comprehensive bullet pointed list of all of your work-related strengths and skills that you can use to develop your career profile. Don't worry about how long that list is. We'll narrow it down later.

See example on pg 9.

4. CORE COMPETENCIES/AREAS OF EXPERTISE

Your STAR...

This is a bulleted list where you highlight your qualities, characteristics, skills, and strengths. With every core competency or area of expertise you list on your resume, you want to be prepared with a **STAR** example of how you benefitted the business. If you can't come up with an example, you won't want to include that item because they WILL ask about it, and you want to have the illustration right at your fingertips.

See example on pg 9.

Pro Tip!

You won't want to highlight those items that are the current price of admission, such as proficiency in Microsoft Word.

STAR Examples (in your back pocket)

Use **STAR** examples to demonstrate your strengths.

Each example should include the following:

Situation

Task

Action

Result

Be prepared with **STAR** examples from your real-life experiences that clearly illustrate your qualities, characteristics, skills, and strengths.

5. EXPERIENCE

Your ROI...

As you list your companies, job titles, and dates of employment, a common mistake is to list what your job duties were instead of your quantifiable achievements. Take this section to the next level by highlighting your achievement-focused accomplishments to get past applicant tracking systems and be seen by the decision-makers.

The best option is to write a 1-2 sentence description of high-level job duties, followed by bulleted, quantifiable results that you achieved for your company. When you mix your job duties with your accomplishments and bullet everything, you dilute the effectiveness of your accomplishments.

See example on pg 9.

Pro Tip!

Access lists of active verbs that are excellent for resumes. Words like “maximized,” “fostered,” and “accelerated” help them see the action you took. Some great resources can be found [HERE](#).*

Pro Tip!

Include volunteer experience if it is relevant to the job.

6. EDUCATION

Just the facts...

Here, you want to go most recent to oldest. Leave off your GPA if it is more than five years old or lower than a 3.4.

A question I get often is “Should I include my year of graduation?” My answer is yes. Even if you are afraid it will date you, your experience will anyway! You don’t want recruiters to think you are trying to hide something.

Pro Tip!

If you attended any college at all, don’t include your high school. If you don’t have a degree, simply list any relevant courses.

*<https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/resumes-cover-letters/action-verbs-to-make-your-resume-stand-out>

7. CERTIFICATIONS

Include any relevant certifications. If you are looking to add oomph to your candidacy for a training-related role, look into CHART's (chart.org) Hospitality Training Competencies Certificate Workshops, the Certified Hospitality Trainer (CHT) certification from AHLEI (ahlei.org), or instructional design certifications from ISFET (isfet.org).

8. AFFILIATIONS/PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

Here's where you can list your CHART membership, as well as any other professional organizations you belong to. I recommend only listing the ones in which you are actively involved.

Note that if you have spacing concerns, you can combine education, certifications, and even affiliations into one category.

HOW TO MAXIMIZE EACH SECTION

The pay off...

What I am going to tell you now will take time, energy, and effort, but is how you add POWER to your resume so that it really stands out.

It's best to target your resume to EACH SPECIFIC JOB. Here's how:

Take the job posting and highlight all of the keywords in it. This is what THEY want, so you will want to look at places on your resume where you can add these words in the places where they make sense and where you can show your value add.

Now, you go BACK to your resume master and edit it by selecting the keyword phrases where you can demonstrate that you are a match for their requirements.

For Example:

Job Description

{Company} is looking for a project-based instructional designer who can **write, design, and develop classroom and e-learning training** as well as supplemental training materials. An ideal candidate will also have experience and interest in **managing projects**.

EXPECTATIONS

Deadline-driven. Our business is fast-paced with many quick-turnaround projects running at once. We expect our team members to meet our productivity guidelines and always deliver on time.

Flexible and dynamic. We work on a variety of projects with clients in myriad industries—manufacturing, health care, IT, construction, travel, etc. You'll need to **get up to speed quickly** and translate technical information into **actionable and easily absorbable training**. Because our work naturally ebbs and flows with some weeks being more stressful than others, we offer flexible schedules and work arrangements.

Proactive and communicative. Because much of our work is virtual or onsite with a client, you won't have someone looking over your shoulder and micromanaging your work. Every project has a mentor and a project leader, so you won't be left on your own, but we do expect a level of **self-management**. We plan on and expect **collaboration** and **communication** on every project.

Committed to quality. {Company} is proud of the work we do, and we want you to take pride in it too. We're looking for IDs who can develop a **wide range of high-quality training materials**, including writing **design documents**, developing **storyboards**, writing **instructor-led training** content, and designing and developing **e-learning**. We want someone who is not afraid to edit, revise, and repeat with team members for the **best final product**.

Your Edited Profile

Instructional Designer with **five years of** progressive experience developing instructor-led, eLearning, and blended training programs based on **adult learning theory**. Dependable and organized team player who consistently delivers **high-quality products** within tight deadlines. Skilled at building relationships and communicating effectively with Subject Matter Experts. Highly proficient in Articulate Storyline and Adobe Captivate.

Your Core Competencies

- Analytical Thinking
- Creativity
- Conflict Resolution
- Communication
- Flexibility, Adaptability
- Project Management
- Captivate
- Storyline
- Articulate 360
- Camtasia
- **Learning Management Systems**
- Video Editing
- Attention to Detail
- **Adult Learning Theory**
- Classroom Facilitation
- ADDIE
- Strategic Planning

Pro Tip!

Ideally, the keywords will appear three times: mixed among your core competencies, profile, and in your experience section. If applicable, use both words and acronyms for items like Learning Management System (LMS).

Pro Tip!

Never lie! You'll be found out. Likewise, don't use overblown language that can't be substantiated.

ONLINE APPLICATION HACKS

Plain Text

Create a plain text version (with no formatting) of your resume for easy uploading into an Applicant Tracking System (ATS). You will still be attaching a pretty PDF, but the plain text version is important for clean copying and pasting into a field in the online application.

Salary Requirement

While you never want to put this on your resume, in online applications sometimes you are forced to put in salary requirements. If you can skip it, skip it. If you can put in a word, put in "negotiable." Some applications are limited to numerical entries. If you can, put in a range. If you are forced to put in a number, put in your desired salary for what that job is worth in the local market. Sometimes, people put in \$1 to get through the system without lowballing yourself, but doing so may be risky.

Dates of Employment

Some applicant tracking systems force you to put in specific dates of your previous job positions rather than just month and year. If you don't know or remember the exact date, just put the 15th of the month as a nice median.

College Majors

Sometimes the ATS requires that you put in a major and yours is not on the dropdown list. Don't sweat this as a general rule. Pick whatever is closest. My bachelor's degree is in Drama, and the closest option is usually Dramaturgy. Definitely not the same, but close enough for an ATS!

COVER LETTERS

To include or not? Some recruiters and hiring managers have the perception that you don't care about the job if you don't include a cover letter. While I am not that person, if it is a job you are really serious about, I recommend you include one.

Pro Tip!

Build a standard cover letter template with two slightly different versions: one for use when submitting to a headhunter or third-party recruiter, and one for submitting directly to the organization.

Pro Tip!

In your cover letter, identify 2-3 important skills or experiences that are bullet points in the job posting and describe how your experience meets that need.

For Example:

Based on your job posting on LinkedIn, the [Job Title] position appears to be a strong match for my qualifications. For example:

Leads a team responsible for delivering learning solutions to [Company Name] associates and clients

I have led teams which developed and delivered both in-person and virtual classes on product knowledge, sales, customer service excellence, business processes, and financial acumen, as well as a variety of compliance courses.

Determines how to price, position, and market our Learning Services to franchisees and clients

Our team developed a series of learning options for franchisees in 22 countries; I determined how to price and position these courses to the franchise owners in order to build a sustainable revenue stream.

Examples continued:

Collaborates closely with leaders throughout the business to ensure that learning is directly aligned with business strategy and goals

I have a reputation within each organization I've worked for as a strong collaborator and partner, with solid business acumen. I start every learning solutions project by connecting with the business leads to clearly identify the desired business outcomes, and my instructional design and development process includes not just the training "events" but also the processes for ongoing sustainability, support, and measurement, so that we can ensure that we continue to meet the needs of the business.

Pro Tip!

Never address your cover letter "To whom it may concern." If you can't get the name of the recruiter or hiring manager, don't address the letter to anyone.

FINISHING TOUCHES

Pro Tip!

Be consistent with fonts, bullet points, and bolding/italics. Use a parallel grammatical structure for lists and bullet points. It's subtle, but it makes a huge difference in readability and perceived attention to detail.

Pro Tip!

Read everything backward. This is a great way to catch spelling errors.

Pro Tip!

Don't include a photograph of yourself. It takes up valuable space, and how you look is not relevant to whether or not you can do the job.

Whatever your career goals, I wish you the best of luck. I hope these tips will help you find the position of your dreams!

EXAMPLE RESUME SECTIONS

1. Contact Information
2. Branding Statement

return to this section

DIRECTOR OF TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

Impacting the bottom line with a strategic and comprehensive approach to learning and development

Name

phone ♦ email@gmail.com
[LinkedIn.com/in/customname](https://www.linkedin.com/in/customname)
City, State

3. Professional Summary & Career Profile

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Professional Summary | Career Profile

Instructional Designer with progressive experience developing instructor-led, eLearning, and blended training programs. Dependable and organized team player who consistently delivers within tight deadlines. Skilled at building relationships and communicating effectively with Subject Matter Experts. Highly proficient in Articulate Storyline and Adobe Captivate.

4. Core Competencies & Areas of Expertise

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Sample Core Competencies | Areas of Expertise

- Analytical Thinking
- Creativity
- Conflict Resolution
- Communication
- Flexibility, Adaptability
- Project Management
- Specific Technical Skills
 - Captivate
 - Storyline
 - Articulate 360
 - Camtasia
- Video Editing
- Succession Planning
- Attention to Detail
- Organization
- Classroom Facilitation
- ADDIE
- Strategic Planning
- Team Leadership
- Culture and Engagement

5. Experience

return to this section

Achievement-Focused Accomplishments

Senior Manager, Training and Development | {Company} | March 2016 to July 2019

Oversaw the creation and implementation of training programs for frontline team members, store managers, and district managers. Managed preparation and updating of all training materials, both printed and online. Reviewed and set development goals for MIT program up to the first six-month appraisal while tracking and reporting MIT progress. Supervised the training and development of 32 Training General Managers. Managed 4 Regional Training Managers and 2 Training Solutions Specialists. Implemented online proficiency testing.

- Decreased overall training time by 33% through an interactive, multi-level training process.
- Reduced employee turnover by 23% in 5 months through a redesigned Server training program.
- Increased Customer Loyalty score by 6 points during same 5-month metric period.
- Reduced training expenses by 12% and completed development of the Shift Supervisor 2 weeks ahead of schedule through inspired instructional design and close project management.