

How to format your resumé

When it comes to your resumé, content is key. But a bad layout could hinder your chances of being noticed. We talk to Paul Hallam, Executive Director of recruitment company [Six Degrees Executive](#) about how to style your resumé for success.

Why the design and layout of your resumé is so important

A great resumé is about substance, so while it might be tempting to dress up your resumé with fancy fonts and graphics, it's much more compelling to have a clean, fuss-free design and layout. According to Hallam, there are other good reasons to ensure a simple resumé design:

- Resumés with graphics and too many columns won't actually [get through Applicant Tracking Systems \(ATS\)](#), so a poorly-designed resumé may not ever be seen by recruiters or hiring managers.
- Fancy or hard-to-read fonts are distracting – busy recruiters and employers won't view them favourably. Best to stick to a sans-serif font, size 11-12pt.
- An aesthetically appealing, functional resumé is a reflection of who you are as a potential employee – it shows your professionalism.

This doesn't mean you're expected to come up with a knock-out resumé design yourself, though. Choosing a simple resumé template and making it your own is the best way to go. [This free resumé template has all you need to get started.](#)

The ideal length

Depending on your relevant experience, your resumé should range from two to four pages long. Focus on quality, not quantity, by keeping your word count tight. Less is more when it comes to providing context for the roles you have listed. Describing what you've achieved in your career in as few words as possible will make your resumé stand out.

The importance of page one

The first page of your resumé is prime real estate and using two columns is a good way to make the most of this important space. Hallam says there are five key things you should include on page one:

1.

Your name and contact details

This should be at the very top, in the header. Use a larger font for your name. Include

your personal phone number and email address, and include location information so your resumé is searchable for potential employers, for example 'Melbourne, Victoria, Australia'. There's no need to include your address, though.

2.

Your personal summary

Your personal summary should paint a picture of who you are, why you're ideal for the role you're applying for and what your career aspirations are. It's best to tailor your personal summary to the role you're applying for and limit it to three to four sentences.

3.

Your key skills

Listing these is a must, so that potential employers can quickly see your core capabilities. Aim for three to four bullet points.

4.

Your education and training

Clearly highlight this. In bold, state the years you started and completed your training, then the course and institution. List your most recent qualification first.

5.

Your professional experience

Your most recent role should appear on page one, followed by previous professional experience on the remaining pages of your resumé. According to Hallam, this is the most important part of your resumé and it's crucial to get the formatting right.

Always highlight your position at the beginning, followed by the organisation and the time you worked there, including the month and year. Write a brief summary of what your position entailed and include two bulleted lists—one for your key responsibilities and the other for your achievements.

The remaining pages of your resumé

After your professional experience, you can include two other sections:

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Hobbies and interests

Hallam says it's a good idea to include something about your life outside of work.

"Including your hobbies, passions or interests is a great way to differentiate yourself and make yourself memorable. It's also an opportunity to build rapport with your interviewer,

especially if you share common interests,” he adds.

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References

You may also wish to include a note at the end of your resumé to say that references are available on request.

What not to include in your resumé

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Photos

In some parts of the world, it's standard to include a photo on your resume – but that's not the case in Australia. You don't need to include a photo on your resumé. There may be exceptions in some fields such as acting or modelling, where you might be asked to include a photo.

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Roles you undertook more than 20 years ago

Focus on your most recent experience instead.

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The words ‘Curriculum Vitae’

‘Resumé’ is more up to date.

Remember—if you want your resumé to stand out, focus on getting the content right, rather than dressing it up with fancy fonts or graphics. A clear and functional resumé will be a much better tool to get you noticed by potential employers.

Read more:

- [Free resume template](#)
- [Cut these words from your resume](#)
- [How to strike the right tone in your resume](#)