

## Developing an Effective Resume

The key to developing an effective resume is to keep in mind that the resume is **your** marketing piece. It is a document that shares with the prospective employer your key skills, abilities, education and training. The resume's purpose is not to get you the job, but to get you the interview. The interview is the part of the process that will get you the job.

Some important points to remember when constructing your resume are:

- 1. Do not try to construct your resume all at one time.** The most effective way to do a resume is to do a first draft, walk away from it for a while and then come back to it with a fresh pair of eyes. A resume is one of the most difficult things to do and trying to force yourself to complete it in an hour or a day may not work for you. Begin by writing down everything you can remember about your past jobs, training, education, etc. Then take that information and begin to streamline it into one of the resume formats that are included in the resume examples. You may eliminate a lot, but it is much easier to eliminate information than try to add information later.
- 2. Your resume is a fluid document.** Years ago, everyone had one resume that they sent for every job. Now with the flexibility of computers, it is much easier to make small changes to your resume to customize it to each individual job. Your resume should be updated on a regular basis. As you acquire additional education, certifications, new jobs, etc, be sure to update your resume. Also, keep in mind that the job search is a process. If you are sending out numerous resumes and are not getting called for interviews, you may want to re-evaluate your resume. It is a good idea to find someone who works in human resources or work with the Career Services department at your college to help you work on your resume. Enlist experts whenever possible.
- 3. Include appropriate contact information.** Be sure that the email address you use on your resume reflects a professional tone. Using an email such as [iluvcats@yahoo.com](mailto:iluvcats@yahoo.com) may not leave the most professional impression with a prospective employer (especially if they are not a cat lover). Get an email address that you will use for professional correspondence. First initial last name@ whatever.com is a great option. If your cell phone is your main contact number, make sure your voice mail message is appropriate and professional. An inappropriate, offensive or juvenile phone message is a major complaint and concern of human resource professionals. The voice mail may be the first point of contact for a prospective employer and much of their first impression of you will be determined by that voice mail message.

4. **Have others read over your resume for errors.** You are your own worst proof reader. If you are the creator of a document, your mind will automatically correct any errors in the document because it knows what is supposed to be there. Have someone else read it over for you. If no one is available, read slowly and out loud. This will focus your brain on the actual sound of the document and you will be amazed how many errors you will find by reading your resume out loud.
5. **Be concise.** Long narratives make it difficult for the reader to zero in on your key skills and abilities. Use bullet points when outlining your work duties and focus on those duties that would be of interest and relevance to a prospective employer.
6. **Your resume can be more than 1 page long.** The old rule of a resume being only 1 page no longer applies. That rule was in place when people stayed in a job for 15 – 20 years. Now, people change jobs an average of every 3-5 years. Keeping your resume to 1 page may be impossible. 2 page resumes are completely acceptable.
7. **“References Available Upon Request”.** No longer needed. It is expected that you will be providing references when requested. Save the room on your resume for more important information.
8. **Information NOT to include.**

Never include:

- Your references
- Reasons for leaving your previous jobs
- Salary of previous jobs
- Personal information such as age, weight, marital status ,etc
- Picture of yourself
- High school information if you have graduated from college
- Date of graduation unless within the last 5 years
- GPA unless it is a 3.5 or above (and only if a recent graduate)

Some examples of resumes have been provided on the Nurse iCON site and there are also some great links available on the Additional Resources section of the web site that will provide additional information about resume development, job search skills, career development etc.