How to Write Your Resume
Checklist and Best Practices

A few seconds to a few minutes – that is how long recruiters take to look over a resume. This is why it is really important to use your CV to showcase your experience and abilities.

At Career Compass, we thought that a guide compiling some of the latest best practices on how to write your resume is something that everyone needs, regardless of the current career stage.

Career Compass is a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) and our mission is to offer education and resources for career development.

1. Start from the job requirements

When you are writing your CV, you need to consider the requirements for the job to which you are applying. The recruiter usually looks for certain keywords, therefore, by customizing your resume for each position you are applying to, you are bound to stand out.

2. Choose the right format

Even though all resumes follow the same best practices and formats, you should review *resume samples specific to your industry*. You can even start from certain templates and adapt them to your situation. As a rule of thumb, you should:

- Use bullet points and be concise - the resume should focus only on the most important experiences, accomplishments and skills;
- Use simple subheadings for your sections – E.g.: Experience, Education, Skills;
- Keep the order chronological in case you are just starting your career (this means that your education is your main selling point and the Education section should come before the Experience section). Use reverse chronological in case you already have experience – meaning list the Experience section and then the Education one;
- List your accomplishments (not just your responsibilities) and use numbers.

3. Use active language

Your resume should contain action words that convey achievement and impact. Furthermore, as a best practice, start your sentences with a verb, rather than with a pronoun.

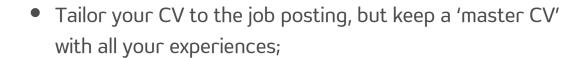## 4. Pay attention to details

Check and re-check for spelling and grammar issues! Some employers take spelling errors and grammar issues as an indication of poor motivation for the job. Even though today's spellcheckers to a great job, make sure you proofread your final draft.

Please find below a section with quick items that you should check off when writing your CV.
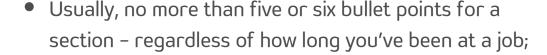
Checklist for your Resume

Please find below a rapid-fire section with quick items that you should check off when writing your CV.

- Tailor your CV to the job posting, but keep a 'master CV' with all your experiences;

- Usually, no more than five or six bullet points for a section – regardless of how long you've been at a job;

- Save your resume as a PDF – do not use other filetypes when applying;

- Name your .pdf file smartly. E.g.: 'Jane_Smith_Resume.pdf' instead of 'Resume.pdf';

- Keep the number of pages to one or to two at most, for professionals with a considerable amount of experience;

- Use a professional email address. E.g.: john.smith@gmail.com and not supercars_j@gmail.com

- Make sure your contact information is up to date;

- Include relevant URLs to Linkedin, GitHub or other professional profiles or portfolios;

- Address gaps in your career history – write a brief explanation next to the periods where these gaps occur;

- Get rid of placeholders – remove unnecessary fluff. E.g.: buzzwords such as: Communication, Shown leadership.. etc.);

- Stick to recent experience – a best practice rule is to include work experience as far back as 15 years;

- Make your resume Application-Tracking System (ATS) friendly – as we've said with the first rule, your resume needs to include relevant keywords from the job posting so that it gets picked up by specialized software used to scan CVs;

- Include all relevant experience – you should include all relevant coursework, volunteer work and extracurriculars;

- Don't include personal details: ethnicity, religion, nationality, sexuality etc.;

- Don't add unnecessary color – unless you're in the creative industries, it's best to stick to a few basic colors;

- Don't add the phrase 'References upon request' – this is no long a best practice;

- Use appropriate fonts (Arial, Times New Roman, Calibri) and steer away from non-professional ones;

- Don't include pictures or photos – this can lead to hiring bias;

- Don't use personal pronouns;

- Don't include salary information, unless you are explicitly asked to do so (and even then it might be worth having a discussion first with the employer);

- Use bold and italics to emphasize important information;

- Last but not least, pair your resume with a convincing cover letter.

In case you found this useful, please go back to www.careercompassngo.com and **Subscribe to our Newsletter**! We send regular resources and information that will support your career development, as well as provide opportunities for education and training.

Good luck!