

Chapter 22

Your Ten-Point Resume Checklist

In This Chapter

- ▶ Making sure your resume matches up with specific job qualifications
- ▶ Using a fire hose on tacky resume errors
- ▶ Standing back for a fresh look at the impression you're making
- ▶ Trusting your resume skills but verifying overall results

Before going public with your resume, give it a final walk-through. Check the box in front of each item only when your resume meets OnTarget standards. Give yourself 10 points for each checkmark. If you don't get a score of 100, go back to your keyboard and try again.

Tit for Tat

- You remember the new drive to customize resumes by matching your qualifications (skills, education) with the specific positions of a job, or by matching your qualifications with the expected qualifications in a career field.**

If you write a two-page resume, you remember to customize the first page, even if you do not customize the second page. (Chapter 1 discusses the customizing requirement and why it's now important.)

Format and Style

- You select the best format for your situation.**

For example, *reverse chronological* when staying in the same field, or *functional* when changing fields. (Chapter 5 covers resume formats.)

Focus and Image

- ❑ **You say what you want to do and why you should be interviewed to do it.**

You let your resume “rest” for a day or so, and then look at it with fresh eyes. You consider its overall impression. What kind of “brand” do you project? Your resume has a theme. You present yourself as focused — not merely desperate to accept just any job.

Achievements and Skills

- ❑ **You relate your skills to the skills needed for the job.**

You cite at least one achievement for each skill. You measure by using numbers, percentages, or dollar amounts for each achievement. You measure any statement you can. You highlight results, not just responsibilities.

Language and Expressions

- ❑ **You make the most of your word choices.**

You use adequate keywords (nouns) to make your resume searchable. You use action verbs to put vitality in your resume. You eliminate words that don’t directly support your bid for the job you want, as well as such meaningless words and phrases as “References available.” You use industry jargon where appropriate, but you translate acronyms, technical jargon, or military lingo into easy-to-understand English. (Chapter 7 reviews word usage.)

Content and Omissions

- ❑ **Your content supports your objective.**

You begin with either a skills summary or a job objective. Next, you state your experience. You begin with your education only if you’re a new graduate with virtually no experience, or if your target job is related to education and training. You don’t list personal information that isn’t related to the job you seek, such as marital status, number of children, or height. (For a refresher on content, see Chapter 6)

Length and Common Sense

- ❑ **You use a length that makes sense for the amount of information you're presenting.**

You limit your resume to one or two pages if you're lightly experienced, or two or three pages if you're substantially experienced. These page counts are only guidelines; your resume can be longer if necessary to put your qualifications in the best light. Additionally, your resume can exceed three pages if it's a professional resume or a CV (curriculum vitae). **Remember:** Don't jam pack a jumble of text on one page; doing so makes your resume too difficult to read.

Appearance: Online Attached and Paper Resumes

- ❑ **Your resume is a real looker.**

Your e-resume in a fully formatted Word document (or equivalent) looks much like a fully formatted paper resume. You use an open layout with white space, minimum one-inch margins, headings in bold typeface or capital letters, bullets, and other low-key graphic elements that make your resume look professional (see Chapter 8). Your paper resume is printed on white or eggshell paper, both for a business impression and because it may be scanned into a database.

Sticky Points and Sugarcoating

- ❑ **You thoughtfully handle all problem areas, such as grouping irrelevant jobs, long-ago, part-time, and temporary jobs.**

You account for all the gaps in the time frame of your resume. You scour your resume for possible hidden negatives and eliminate them as described in Chapter 10.

Proofreading and More Proofreading

- Your resume contains no typos, no grammar disasters — no errors of any kind**

You not only use your computer's spell-checker, but you also double-check (and triple-check) it. You ask others to carefully read it. Typos are hot buttons to many employers — two goofs and you're gone.