

Hed: **How to Create the Standout Resume**

Dek: Overhaul your resume today and land the job of your dreams. Our experts show you how.

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TEXT:

You often find yourself rambling about your insane boss to your friends, while to your co-workers, you only say two words: “hi” and “bye.” At nights, you dream of a better workplace, but you’re nervous about going out on the job market again. Or maybe you don’t have a job to deal with at all -- you’ve applied to so many by now and gotten no response that you’re fast losing hope.

If any of these scenarios sound familiar to you, don’t despair. You *can* get a job, and not just *any* job, but one that inspires you. All you need is the one thing you’ve been missing up to now: the standout resume. Here’s what it looks like and how you can get it.

The Standout Resume is ... a list of your accomplishments, not tasks.

Fact: Most people list a few responsibilities under each of their previous jobs, not taking the time to explore the impact of their work. Zero in on specifics that improved internal processes or garnered your past employers more revenue, and your resume will instantly stand out. For example, if you started emailing your boss rather than leaving notes about phone messages, you didn’t just “answer phones” -- you actually “improved in-office communications by upgrading to a digital message-delivery system.”

The Standout Resume is ... tailored to every job.

What every company wants is different, so take the time to study the company website and the job ad closely. Use their language as you make your experience relevant to them in your resume and cover letter. Yes, this means you’ll have to tweak your resume for every single job you apply to, which can be time-consuming. But if hiring managers start to feel you’re the perfect candidate as they read your resume because you took the time to show them why, it’s worth it.

The Standout Resume is ... brief.

When it comes to resumes, less is actually more. “Never make it a lot of work for the person who is seeing your resume,” says Peter Sikowitz, executive vice president of Studio One, a content marketing company in New York City. “The

most important thing is to make the information as succinct as possible.” Try to keep yours to a page, and don’t worry too much about what you leave out. Just be sure that everything you include ties back to what the job post asks for.

The Standout Resume is ... easy on the eyes.

Stop fumbling with the resume format, and focus instead on the information that goes in it. “People obsess about formats, but there are many formats that work,” says Sikowitz. Bullet points are a good way to ensure that your resume isn’t full of blocks of text that scan as slowly as an *Encyclopedia Britannica* page.

The Standout Resume is ... complemented by the standout cover letter.

Be mindful of your cover letter too. “Cover notes can reveal a tremendous amount about the person,” explains Sikowitz. They are your chance to give potential employers an idea of your personality and character. These two factors are *just as important* as professional accomplishments, says Sikowitz.

A thoughtful cover letter will show employers that you are detail-oriented and willing to go the distance. Personalize it so it’s clear that you know what the company is about. Consider offering ideas for improvement too that are relevant to what you’re applying for (lovely website, but do they have a Twitter account?). Just be sure to keep your letter as concise and to the point as your resume.

The Standout Resume is ... best after it’s reviewed by others.

Put shyness aside and share your resume with your friends, family or a career advisor. They’ll see things you don’t. Maya Lawrence, an associate at an educational nonprofit who pulled off a tricky career transition had a career counselor and two or three people look over her resume. They all suggested ways to rearrange information in a way that helped her land the job. She was also told that the PDF had mangled the file’s formatting -- something she never would have discovered on her own.

The Standout Resume is ... your best friend during your interview.

Your standout resume *will* get you calls from potential employers. Bring multiple copies of your resume to your interview, and use it to guide your future employer through your work history. But don’t read your resume word for word -- stay conversational, once again focusing on how your experience is relevant to this job and what you can do for the company.

No matter what, smile bright and remember: You *can* do this job. If you believe that, your inner strength will shine through, confirming to the hiring managers that you’re the future office star they suspected you would be when they first saw your resume.