

Music Résumé Handbook

Music Career Services DePaul School of Music

music.depaul.edu>Resources>Career Services

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The Basics: Résumés 101

- What is a résumé? A résumé provides a formal overview of your current and past professional and educational experiences. As concise as possible, it should provide the reader with a blueprint of who you are, only including current and relevant information for the position in which you are applying.
- An effective résumé generates enough interest by the reader to warrant an invitation for an interview or audition. The résumé should serve an advertisement of and for a product—you! It is typical for musicians to have several versions of their résumé—one for performance, one for teaching, one for arts administration, etc.
- Because a résumé is your representative when you are not present, you want it to be perfect—well organized and polished. And while a great résumé alone will usually not secure a job, a poor résumé can easily prevent you from even getting in the door.

Gathering Content

Here is a list of résumé categories to help you get started. Look them over and decide which ones would best represent *your* professional and educational experience.

Remember, you do not need to use every category! This list is only *possible* categories, and is not exhaustive by any means. Some of these categories may not suit your needs—this is okay!

Use DePaul School of Music's **Résumé Builder Worksheet** at the back of this handbook to help get organized. It is best to first write down everything under the appropriate categories, not being too quick to prejudge your experience. Many people are experts at talking themselves out of including good, relevant experience before they can even get it down on paper. Save the editing for later until you have a better idea of the layout you'd like to use. Keep an open mind!

Some categories may be exclusive to the type of music you perform. For example:

For Classical Vocalists: Full Roles, Partial Roles, Choral Experience, Solo Recitals, Musical Theater, etc.

For Jazz Musicians: Clubs, Other Venues, Jazz Festivals, Has Performed with;, Recordings, Ensembles, etc.

For Classical Instrumentalists: Orchestral Experience, Chamber Music Experience, Solo Performances, Soloists with Orchestra

For Composers: Original Works (or just 'Compositions'), Selected Compositions, Premieres, Selected Performances of Compositions, Current Projects, Arrangements/Transcriptions, Commissioned Works

Pianists: Solo Recitals, Soloists with Orchestra, Chamber Music Performances, Accompanying, Church Positions

Standard categories include:

<p>Name Instrument/Voice Type Mailing Address (Mailing addresses are no long considered necessary, however you may include if you wish) Phone number Email Address (A word about email: If you do not have a professional email account and your email is something like "RobotsRCool@gmail.com", this would be a good time to set one up—usually your name and adding your instrument is a safe option. You want the potential employer to take you seriously. Use common sense!)</p> <p>Website</p> <p>Education/Training</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Degree(s) earned (include name of institutions and dates)- Grade Point Average- High School Study (if at a major music preparatory institution)- Major/Principal Teachers- Master Classes- Coaches- Summer Festivals- Professional Certification, Licensure, Accreditation- Freelance Work- Conducting/Guest conducting	<p>Recordings and Broadcasts Tours Competitions Honors/Awards</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Scholarships- Fellowships- Scholastic Awards- Prizes and Grants <p>Other Experience</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Language Proficiency- Community Service- Volunteer Work- Collegiate Extracurricular Activities
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Here is what a brainstorming session for an instrumentalist might look like:

Jane Johnson

Violin

43210 Lincoln Ave.

Chicago, IL 60618

(312) 555-1212

janejohnsonviolin@gmail.com

www.janejohnsonviolin.com

Orchestra Experience

- Illinois Philharmonic Orchestra, substitute, 2015
- Cook County Festival Orchestra and Chamber Orchestra, 2015
- DePaul Symphony Orchestra, concertmaster, 2014-2015
- Civic Orchestra of Chicago, 2013-2015
- DePaul Concert Orchestra 2011-2013
- DePaul Opera Theater Orchestra, 2012-2015
- Interlochen Arts Academy Orchestra, assistant concertmaster, 2010-2011

Solos with Orchestras

- Elmhurst Symphony Orchestra, Stephen Alltop conducting, 2009
- Illinois Symphony Orchestra, Alastair Willis conducting, 2010

Chamber Music

- Chicago Quartet Seminar, 2010-2011
- Coaching with the Chicago Quartet
- Performances in The National Shrine of Saint Frances Xavier Cabrini
- Member of the Belden Piano Trio. DePaul School of Music, 2013 – 2015
- Ensemble 20+: contemporary ensemble, 2012-2014

Education

BM, Violin Performance, May 2015, DePaul University School of Music

High School Diploma, May 2011, Interlochen Arts Academy

Awards and Scholarships

DePaul School of Music Performance Award 2011-2015

Winner, Interlochen Arts Academy Solo Competition, 2011

Choosing the Right Format

Once you are satisfied with the results of your brainstorm session, you need to decide on the format for your résumé. Here are some options to consider:

Reverse Chronological

Exactly what it says, you list your work experience in reverse chronological order so that the most recent information is at the top of the page. This format allows the reader to track your work history and to easily visualize gaps in employment as well as professional growth. Many people who use this format do so *within* the sub categories they have chosen to include on their résumé, *not* necessarily for the entire résumé. This format is recommended for nearly all instances.

Order of Importance

Experiences are listed in order of importance so that the reader can quickly see your most impressive and relevant information first. This is the most common format for performance résumés. If you are applying for an opera company role, you do not want your choral experience to be at the top and your experience singing major operatic roles buried at the bottom of the page.

Functional

This format highlights your abilities, skills and accomplishments rather than the places where you learned them. Work experience should still be listed separately, but the focus is on skills and pointing out those that are the most transferrable to the job for which you are applying. This is probably the least common format for performance résumés, however it could be appropriate for arts administration positions that require a certain skill set.

Order of Categories

The order of résumé categories should reflect your level of experience as well as the position for which you are applying. For someone with significant performance experience, this is the most important category to show to the employer. For a recent graduate, it is best to keep education at the top. As your experience grows, you will need to rearrange the categories, adding new and remove older content. Remember, your résumé is a “living” document.

Other Tips

- **Only include information relevant to the position you are seeking.** For example, generally speaking, performance résumés should not include teaching or arts administration experience. However, if you know the orchestra does significant community engagement work, it may be beneficial to include this if you have that experience.
- **Don't be afraid of white space.** You want your résumé to be reader-friendly and visually pleasing. It's not about filling up the page—it's about keeping your content relevant!
- **One page or two?** This is a hotly debated topic, so here is a good rule of thumb: if you *truly* have enough *relevant* and *important* experience, training, etc. to showcase and it takes more than one page to do so, then go for it. But if you can tell your story in less space? Please do. If you are having trouble shrinking the text down to one page, try changing the margins or the

point size of the spaces in between text. In the word processing software, turn the paragraph symbol ¶ “on” so the formatting guides are visible.

- **Choose a simple font:** Something clean and modern like Helvetica, Garamond, Georgia are nice options. Times New Roman is the most default of fonts, so consider finding an alternative if you want your résumé to stand out from the crowd. Use a font size between 10 and 12 to make it easy on hiring managers’ eyes.

Finding Your Style

You will want to design a letterhead at the top of your page with your name, email address, and telephone number. Choose something attractive and professional so that it stands out. Make sure to also use this for your cover letter. This font in your letterhead can be different from the rest of the résumé if you wish. Here are some examples:

Jane Johnson, Violin
312.555.1212 • janejohnsonviolin@gmail.com
www.janejohnsonviolin.com

Jane Johnson, Violin

(312) 555-1212 • janejohnsonviolin@gmail.com • www.janejohnsonviolin.com

Jane Johnson, violin
312.555.1212 • 43210 N. Lincoln Ave, Chicago, IL
janejohnsonviolin@gmail.com
www.janejohnsonviolin.com

The Finishing Touches

- **Proofread, proofread, proofread!** You don’t want to solely rely on spell check and grammar check. Ask a friend to read it over with ‘fresh eyes’.
- **Always save your file as a PDF.** Sending a text document (like Word or Pages) runs the risk of the formatting going awry when the recipient opens it.
- **Name your file thoughtfully.** Instead of saving it as “My Résumé”, put your name (and possibly your instrument) in there for clarity. It’s one less step the hiring manager has to do!
- **Make an appointment with Music Career Services!** Whether you are starting your résumé from scratch, or just need to fine-tune it, Rachael is here to help! Email her at rachael.smith@depaul.edu to set up an appointment.

Music Résumé Builder Worksheet

(Template used with permission from Eastman School of Music)

This worksheet breaks down the previously mentioned categories that you may wish to include in your résumé. Some of the categories may not suit your needs, and you may not have information that fits into every category. Don't worry! Begin building your résumé by writing down **every** experience where appropriate. Later, you can decide what to keep and what to omit. You can also just use as a guide, and start your own document from scratch.

Full Name

(If you normally use a nickname, it is best to use your full name on your professional résumé)

Phone Number _____ Email Address _____

EDUCATION

Name of school	City/state	Degree received	Major	Graduation date	GPA (Optional)	Other

Other credentials / licenses / professional affiliations

PERFORMANCE EXPERIENCE

Solo (event name, orchestra, conductor, collaborator(s), city, state, venue, notes, date)

Recitals (event name / degree, collaborator(s), city, state, venue, notes, date)

Chamber music (event name, coaches, collaborator(s), city, state, venue, notes, date)

Accompany /ist (event name, collaborator(s), city, state, venue, notes, date)

Orchestra (ensemble name, position, conductor, collaborator(s), city, state, venue, notes, date)

Wind Ensemble (ensemble name, position, conductor, collaborator(s), city, state, venue, notes, date)

Jazz (ensemble name, position, collaborator(s), city, state, venue, notes, date)

Rock/Pop (ensemble name, position, collaborator(s), city, state, venue, notes, date)

Opera (production, role, collaborator(s), city, state, venue, notes, date)

Choral (ensemble, voice part, collaborator(s), city, state, venue, notes, date)

Church (church name, responsibilities, collaborator(s), city, state, venue, notes, date)

TEACHING EXPERIENCE (from most recent)

Schools (school district, city, state, age / grade levels, ensemble(s) conducted, lessons taught (instruments, voice, other) when)

Music coaching (who, where, when)

Private studio (age / grades, instruments / voice, where, when)

Summer camps (ages / grades, specific lessons, ensembles, conductor(s), where, when)

Master classes given (to whom, where, when)

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE (paid experience)

Solo (event name, orchestra, conductor, collaborator(s), city, state, venue, notes, date)

Chamber music (event name, coaches, collaborator(s), city, state, venue, notes, date)

Accompany /ist (event name, collaborator(s), city, state, venue, notes, date)

Orchestra (ensemble name, position, conductor, collaborator(s), city, state, venue, notes, date)

Music director (orchestra, conductor, collaborator(s), city, state, venue, notes, date)

Wind Ensemble (ensemble name, position, conductor, collaborator(s), city, state, venue, notes, date)

Jazz (ensemble name, position, collaborator(s), city, state, venue, notes, date)

Opera (production, role, collaborator(s), city, state, venue, notes, date)

Choral (ensemble, voice part, collaborator(s), city, state, venue, notes, date)

Rock/Pop (ensemble name, position, collaborator(s), city, state, venue, notes, date)

Church (church name, responsibilities, collaborator(s), city, state, venue, notes, date)

TEACHERS

Major/Principal teachers (college/private, where)

Chamber coaches (ensemble, date(s), where)

Master classes (with whom, where)

Summer festivals (name of festival, collaborator(s), where, when)

RELATED EXPERIENCE

Arts Administration (position(s), responsibilities, where, when)

Internships (position(s), responsibilities, where, when)

Non-music teaching (position(s), responsibilities, where, when)

Other (position, responsibilities, where, when)

REPERTOIRE

Some schools or music festivals may require you to submit a list of repertoire. It is also a good idea to keep a list for your own records.

Solo (title, composer)

Orchestra/Wind Ensemble (title, composer)

Jazz (title, composer)

Opera, voices (title, composer)

Pop/Rock (title, composer)

COMPOSITIONS and ARRANGEMENTS

Original compositions (title, composer/arranger, venue, collaborator(s), notes, date)

Premieres (title, composer/arranger, venue, collaborator(s), notes, date)

Current projects (title, composer/arranger, venue, collaborator(s), notes, date)

Commissioned works (title, composer/arranger, venue, collaborator(s), notes, date)

HONORS and AWARDS (scholarships, fellowships, grants and prizes, scholastic award)

COMPETITIONS (name, placement, where, when)

PUBLICATION (title, publisher, date)

RECORDING and BROADCAST

PROFESSIONAL PRESENTATIONS/LECTURES

RELATED or ADDITIONAL SKILLS (computer, language)

ADDITIONAL EXPERIENCE (community service, volunteer work, non-music-related work, collegiate extracurricular activities)

Sources Consulted in Writing the SOM Music Resume Handbook

2012 The Music Performance Resume Handbook, Rochester, NY:
Office of Careers and Professional Development, Eastman School of Music

2013 Tips for Writing Performance and Composition Resumes, Boston, MA:
New England Conservatory Entrepreneurial Musicianship

“43 Resume Tips That Will Help You Get Hired”:

<https://www.themuse.com/advice/43-resume-tips-that-will-help-you-get-hired>
Accessed on September 30, 2015

43 Resume Tips That Will Help You Get Hired

from <https://www.themuse.com/advice/43-resume-tips-that-will-help-you-get-hired>

By [Erin Greenawald](#)

When you haven't updated your resume in a while, it can be hard to know where to start. What experiences and accomplishments should you include for the jobs you've got your eye on? What new resume rules and trends should you be following? And seriously, one page or two? Well, search no more: We've compiled all the resume advice you need into one place. Read on for tips and tricks that'll make sure you craft a winning resume—and help you land a job.

Telling Your Story

1. Don't Put Everything on There

Your resume should not have every work experience you've ever had listed on it. Think of your resume not as a comprehensive list of your career history, but as a marketing document selling you as the perfect person for the job. For each resume you send out, you'll want to highlight only the accomplishments and skills that are most relevant to the job at hand (even if that means you don't include all of your experience). Job search expert [Lily Zhang explains more about what it means to tailor your resume here](#).

2. But Keep a Master List of All Jobs

Since you'll want to be swapping different information in and out depending on the job you're applying to, keep a resume master list on your computer where you keep any information you've ever included on a resume: old positions, bullet points tailored for different applications, special projects that only sometimes make sense to include. Then, when you're crafting each resume, it's just a matter of cutting and pasting relevant information together. Think of this as your [brag file](#).

3. Put the Best Stuff "Above the Fold"

In marketing speak, "above the fold" refers to what you see on the front half of a folded newspaper (or, in the digital age, before you scroll down on a website), but basically it's your first impression of a document. In resume speak, it means you should make sure your best experiences and accomplishments are visible on the top third of your resume. This top section is what the hiring manager is going to see first—and what will serve as a hook for someone to keep on reading. So focus on putting your best, most relevant experiences first—and then check out these [five other marketing tricks to get your resume noticed](#).

4. Ditch the Objective Statement

[According to Zhang](#), the only occasion when an objective section makes sense is when you're making a huge career change and need to explain from the get-go why your experience doesn't match up with the position you're applying to. In every other case? Consider [whether a](#)

[summary statement would be right for you](#)—or just nix it altogether to save space and focus on making the rest of your resume stellar.

5. Keep it (Reverse) Chronological

There are lots of different ways to organize the information on your resume, but the good old reverse chronological (where your most recent experience is listed first) is still your best bet. Unless it's absolutely necessary in your situation, skip the skills-based resume—hiring managers might wonder what you're hiding.

6. Keep it to a Page

The two- (or more!) page resume is [a hotly debated topic](#), but the bottom line is this—you want the information here to be concise, and making yourself keep it to one page is a good way to force yourself to do this. If you *truly* have enough *relevant* and *important* experience, training, and credentials to showcase on more than one page of your resume, then go for it. But if you can tell the same story in less space? Do. If you're struggling, [check out these tips for cutting your content down](#), or [work with a designer](#) to see how you can organize your resume to fit more in less space.

7. Consider an Online Supplement

Can't figure out how to tell your whole story on one page, or want to be able to include some visual examples of your work? Instead of trying to have your resume cover everything, cover the most important details on that document, and then include a link to [your personal website](#), where you can dive more into what makes you the ideal candidate.

Formatting

8. Keep it Simple

We'll talk about getting creative in order to stand out in a minute. But the most basic principle of [good resume formatting and design](#)? Keep it simple. Use a basic but modern font, like Helvetica, Arial, or Century Gothic. Make your resume easy on hiring managers' eyes by using a font size between 10 and 12 and leaving a healthy amount of white space on the page. You can use a different font or typeface for your name, your resume headers, and the companies for which you've worked, but keep it simple and keep it consistent. Your main focus here should be on readability for the hiring manager. That being said, you should feel free to...

9. Carefully Stand Out

Really want your resume stand out from the sea of Times New Roman? Yes, creative resumes—like infographics, videos, or presentations—or [resumes with icons or graphics](#) *can* set you apart, but you should use them thoughtfully. If you're applying through an ATS, keep to the standard formatting without any bells and whistles so the computer can read it effectively. If you're applying to a more traditional company, don't get too crazy, but feel free to add some tasteful design elements or a little color to make it pop. No matter what, don't do it unless you're

willing to put in the time, creativity, and design work to make it awesome, [or get help from a professional](#).

10. Make Your Contact Info Prominent

You don't need to include your address on your resume anymore (really!), but you do need to make sure to include a phone number and professional email address (not your work address!) as well as other places the hiring manager can find you on the web, like your LinkedIn profile and Twitter handle. (Implicit in this is that you keep these social media profiles suitable for prospective employers.)

11. Design for Skimmability

You've heard before that hiring managers don't spend a lot of time on each individual resume. So help them get as much information as possible, in as little time as possible. [These 12 small formatting changes](#) will make a huge difference.

12. Get Help From a Professional

Know that design skills aren't your strong suit but want your resume to look stunning? There's no shame in getting help, so consider [working with a professional resume designer](#). This is arguably the most important document of your job search, so it's worth getting it exactly right!

Work Experience

13. Keep it Recent, Keep it Relevant

As a rule, you should only show the most recent 10-15 years of your career history and only include the experience relevant to the positions to which you are applying. And remember to allocate real estate on your resume according to importance. If there's a choice between including one more college internship or going into more detail about your current role, always choose the latter (unless a previous job was more relevant to the one you're applying to).

14. No Relevant Experience? No Worries!

Don't panic if you don't have any experience that fits the bill. Instead, [Zhang explains](#), focus your resume on your relevant and transferrable skills along with any related side or academic projects, and then make sure to pair it with a strong cover letter telling the narrative of why you're ideal for the job.

15. Curate Your Bullet Points

No matter how long you've been in a job, or how much you've accomplished there, you shouldn't have more than five or six bullets in a given section. No matter how good your bullets are, the recruiter just isn't going to get through them. Check out [these tips for writing impressive bullet points](#).

16. Bring it Down a Level

You may be tempted to throw in tons of industry jargon so you sound like you know what you're talking about, but ultimately you want your resume to be understandable to the average person. Remember that the first person who sees your resume might be a recruiter, an assistant, or even a high-level executive—and you want to be sure that it is readable, relevant, and interesting to all of them.

17. Give 'Em the Numbers

Use as many facts, figures, and numbers as you can in your bullet points. How many people were impacted by your work? By what percentage did you exceed your goals? By quantifying your accomplishments, you really allow the hiring manager to picture the level of work or responsibility you needed to achieve them. Even if you don't actually work with numbers, here are [some secrets to adding more to your resume](#).

18. Take it One Step Further

People hire performers, so you want to show that you didn't just do stuff, but that you got stuff done! As you look at your bullet points, think about how you can take each statement one step further and add in what the benefit was to your boss or your company. By doing this, you clearly communicate not only what you're capable of, but also the direct benefit the employer will receive by hiring you. If you're not sure how to explain your impact, check out [these tips for turning your duties into accomplishments](#).

19. Show—Don't Tell—Your Soft Skills

Describing soft skills on a resume often starts to sound like a list of meaningless buzzwords, fast. But being a "strong leader" or an "effective communicator" are important characteristics you want to get across. Think about how you can demonstrate these attributes in your bullet points without actually saying them. [Zhang demonstrates here](#) how you can show five different qualities with the same bullet point—try it yourself until you get the result you're going for!

20. Don't Neglect Non-Traditional Work

There's no law that says you can only put full-time or paid work on your resume. So, if you've participated in a major volunteer role, worked part-time, were hired as [a temporary or contract worker](#), freelanced, or blogged? Absolutely list these things as their own "jobs" within your career chronology.

21. Mix Up Your Word Use

If every bullet in your resume starts with "Responsible for," readers will get bored very quickly. Use [our handy list of better verbs to mix it up!](#)

22. Use Keywords

Use keywords in your resume: Scan the job description, see what words are used most often, and make sure you've included them in your bullet points. Not only is this a self-check that you're targeting your resume to the job, it'll make sure you get noticed in applicant tracking

systems. Stuck on which words to include? [Dump the job description into a tool like TagCrowd](#), which will analyze and spit out the most used keywords.

23. Avoid Empty Words

What words shouldn't you include? Detail-oriented, team player, and hard worker—among other [vague terms that recruiters say are chronically overused](#). We bet there's a better way to describe how awesome you are.

Education

24. Experience First, Education Second

Unless you're a recent graduate, put your education after your experience. Chances are, your last couple of jobs are more important and relevant to you getting the job than where you went to college.

25. Also Keep it Reverse Chronological

Usually, you should lay down your educational background by listing the most recent or advanced degree first, working in reverse chronological order. But if older coursework is more specific to the job, list that first to grab the reviewer's attention.

26. But Skip the Dates

Don't list your graduation dates. The reviewer cares more about whether or not you have the degree than when you earned it.

27. Highlight Honors, Not GPA

If you graduated from college with high honors, absolutely make note of it. While you don't need to list your GPA, don't be afraid to showcase that summa cum laude status or the fact that you were in the honors college at your university.

28. Include Continuing or Online Education

Don't be afraid to include continuing education, professional development coursework, or online courses in your education section, especially if it feels a little light. [Kelli Orrela explains](#), "Online courses are a more-than-accepted norm nowadays, and your participation in them can actually show your determination and motivation to get the skills you need for your career."

Skills, Awards, and Interests

29. List Out Your Skills

Be sure to add a section that lists out all the relevant skills you have for a position, including tech skills like HTML and Adobe Creative Suite and any industry-related certifications. Just make sure to skip including skills that everyone is expected to have, like using email or Microsoft Word. Doing so will actually make you seem *less* technologically savvy.

30. Divvy Them Up

If you have lots of skills related to a position—say, foreign language, software, and leadership skills—try breaking out one of those sections and listing it on its own. Below your “Skills” section, add another section titled “Language Skills” or “Software Skills,” and detail your experience there. Again—we’re going for skimmability here, folks!

31. Show Some Personality

Feel free to include an “Interests” section on your resume, but only add those that are relevant to the job. Are you a guitar player with your eye on a music company? Definitely include it. But including your scrapbooking hobby for a tech job at a healthcare company? Don’t even think about it.

32. Beware of Interests That Could Be Controversial

Maybe you help raise money for your church on the reg. Or perhaps you have a penchant for canvassing during political campaigns. Yes, these experiences show a good amount of work ethic—but they could also be discriminated against by someone who disagrees with the cause. [Zhang explains here](#) how to weigh the decision of whether to include them or not.

33. Strut Your Stuff

Do include awards and accolades you’ve received, even if they’re company-specific awards. Just state what you earned them for, e.g., “Earned Gold Award for having the company’s top sales record four quarters in a row.” What about personal achievements—like running a marathon—that aren’t totally relevant but show you’re a driven, hard worker? [Zhang shares](#) the proper ways to include them.

Gaps and Other Sticky Resume Situations

34. Kill the Short-Term Jobs

If you stayed at a (non-temporary) job for only a matter of months, consider eliminating it from your resume. [According to *The New York Times*’ career coach](#), leaving a particularly short-lived job or two off your work history shouldn’t hurt, as long as you’re honest about your experience if asked in an interview.

35. Deal with the Gaps

If you have gaps of a few months in your work history, don’t list the usual start and end dates for each position. Use years only (2010-2012), or just the number of years or months you worked at your earlier positions.

36. Explain Serial Job Hopping

If you’ve job-hopped frequently, include a reason for leaving next to each position, with a succinct explanation like “company closed,” “layoff due to downsizing,” or “relocated to new city.” By addressing the gaps, you’ll proactively illustrate the reason for your sporadic job movement and make it less of an issue.

37. Explain a Long Break in Jobs

Re-entering the workforce after a long hiatus? This is the perfect opportunity for a summary statement at the top, outlining your best skills and accomplishments. Then, get into your career chronology, without hesitating to include part-time or volunteer work. [See more tips from Jenny Foss](#) for killing it on your comeback resume.

38. Don't Try to Get Cute

Don't try to creatively fill in gaps on your resume. For example, if you took time out of the workforce to raise kids, don't list your parenting experience on your resume, à la "adeptly managed the growing pile of laundry" (we've seen it). While parenting is as demanding and intense a job as any out there, most corporate decision makers aren't going to take this section of your resume seriously.

Finishing Touches

39. Ditch "References Available Upon Request"

If a hiring manager is interested in you, he or she will ask you for references—and will assume that you have them. There's no need to address the obvious (and doing so might even make you look a little presumptuous!).

40. Proofread, Proofread, Proofread

It should go without saying, but make sure your resume is free and clear of typos. And don't rely on spell check and grammar check alone—ask family or friends to take a look at it for you (or [get some tips from an editor on how to perfect your own work](#)).

41. Save it as a PDF

If emailing your resume, make sure to always send a PDF rather than a .doc. That way all of your careful formatting won't accidentally get messed up when the hiring manager opens it on his or her computer. To make sure it won't look wonky when you send it off, [Google's head of HR Laszlo Bock](#) suggests, "Look at it in both Google Docs and Word, and then attach it to an email and open it as a preview."

42. Name Your File Smartly

Ready to save your resume and send it off? Save it as "Jane Smith Resume" instead of "Resume." It's one less step the hiring manager has to take.

43. Constantly Refresh It

Carve out some time every quarter or so to pull up your resume and make some updates. Have you taken on new responsibilities? Learned new skills? Add them in. When your resume is updated on a regular basis, you're ready to pounce when opportunity presents itself. And, even if you're not job searching, [there are plenty of good reasons](#) to keep this document in tip-top shape.

85 Powerful Verbs That Will Make Your Resume Awesome

By The Daily Muse Editor

Led...

Handled...

Managed...

Responsible for...

Most resume bullet points start with the same words. Frankly, the same tired old words hiring managers have heard over and over—to the point where they've lost a lot of their meaning and don't do much to show off your awesome accomplishments. So, let's get a little more creative, shall we? Next time you update your resume, switch up a few of those common words and phrases with strong, compelling action verbs that will catch hiring managers' eyes.

No matter what duty or accomplishment you're trying to show off, we've got just the verb for you. Check out the list below, and get ready to make your resume way more exciting.

You Led a Project

If you were in charge of a project or initiative from start to finish, skip "led" and instead try:

1. Chaired
2. Controlled
3. Coordinated
4. Executed
5. Headed
6. Operated
7. Orchestrated
8. Organized
9. Oversaw
10. Planned
11. Produced
12. Programmed

You Envisioned and Brought to Life a Project

And if you actually developed, created, or introduced that project into your company? Try:

13. Administered
14. Built
15. Charted
16. Created
17. Designed
18. Developed
19. Devised
20. Founded
21. Engineered
22. Established
23. Formalized
24. Formed
25. Formulated

26. Implemented
27. Incorporated
28. Initiated
29. Instituted
30. Introduced
31. Launched
32. Pioneered
33. Spearheaded

You Saved the Company Time or Money

Hiring managers love candidates who've helped a team operate more efficiently or cost-effectively. To show just how much you saved, try:

34. Conserved
35. Consolidated
36. Decreased
37. Deducted
38. Diagnosed
39. Lessened
40. Reconciled
41. Reduced
42. Yielded

You Increased Efficiency, Sales, Revenue, or Customer Satisfaction

Along similar lines, if you can show that your work boosted the company's numbers in some way, you're bound to impress. In these cases, consider:

43. Accelerated
44. Achieved
45. Advanced
46. Amplified
47. Boosted
48. Capitalized
49. Delivered
50. Enhanced
51. Expanded
52. Expedited
53. Furthered
54. Gained
55. Generated
56. Improved
57. Lifted
58. Maximized
59. Outpaced
60. Stimulated
61. Sustained

You Changed or Improved Something

So, you brought your department's invoicing system out of the Stone Age and onto the interwebs? Talk about the amazing changes you made at your office with these words:

62. Centralized
63. Clarified
64. Converted
65. Customized
66. Influenced
67. Integrated
68. Merged
69. Modified
70. Overhauled
71. Redesigned
72. Refined
73. Refocused
74. Rehabilitated
75. Remodeled
76. Reorganized
77. Replaced
78. Restructured
79. Revamped
80. Revitalized
81. Simplified
82. Standardized
83. Streamlined
84. Strengthened
85. Updated
86. Upgraded
87. Transformed

You Managed a Team

Instead of reciting your management duties, like “Led a team...” or “Managed employees...” show what an inspirational leader you were, with terms like:

88. Aligned
89. Cultivated
90. Directed
91. Enabled
92. Facilitated
93. Fostered
94. Guided
95. Hired
96. Inspired
97. Mentored
98. Mobilized
99. Motivated
100. Recruited
101. Regulated
102. Shaped
103. Supervised
104. Taught

- 105. Trained
- 106. Unified
- 107. United

You Brought in Partners, Funding, or Resources

Were you “responsible for” a great new partner, sponsor, or source of funding? Try:

- 108. Acquired
- 109. Forged
- 110. Navigated
- 111. Negotiated
- 112. Partnered
- 113. Secured

You Supported Customers

Because manning the phones or answering questions really means you’re advising customers and meeting their needs, use:

- 114. Advised
- 115. Advocated
- 116. Arbitrated
- 117. Coached
- 118. Consulted
- 119. Educated
- 120. Fielded
- 121. Informed
- 122. Resolved

You Were a Research Machine

Did your job include research, analysis, or fact-finding? Mix up your verbiage with these words:

- 123. Analyzed
- 124. Assembled
- 125. Assessed
- 126. Audited
- 127. Calculated
- 128. Discovered
- 129. Evaluated
- 130. Examined
- 131. Explored
- 132. Forecasted
- 133. Identified
- 134. Interpreted
- 135. Investigated
- 136. Mapped
- 137. Measured
- 138. Qualified
- 139. Quantified
- 140. Surveyed
- 141. Tested
- 142. Tracked

You Wrote or Communicated

Was writing, speaking, lobbying, or otherwise communicating part of your gig?

You can explain just how compelling you were with words like:

- 143. Authored
- 144. Briefed
- 145. Campaigned
- 146. Co authored
- 147. Composed
- 148. Conveyed
- 149. Convinced
- 150. Corresponded
- 151. Counseled
- 152. Critiqued
- 153. Defined
- 154. Documented
- 155. Edited
- 156. Illustrated
- 157. Lobbied
- 158. Persuaded
- 159. Promoted
- 160. Publicized
- 161. Reviewed

You Oversaw or Regulated

Whether you enforced protocol or managed your department's requests, describe what you really did, better, with these words:

- 162. Authorized
- 163. Blocked
- 164. Delegated
- 165. Dispatched
- 166. Enforced
- 167. Ensured
- 168. Inspected
- 169. Itemized
- 170. Monitored
- 171. Screened
- 172. Scrutinized
- 173. Verified

You Achieved Something

Did you hit your goals? Win a coveted department award? Don't forget to include that on your resume, with words like:

- 174. Attained
- 175. Awarded
- 176. Completed
- 177. Demonstrated
- 178. Earned
- 179. Exceeded
- 180. Outperformed
- 181. Reached
- 182. Showcased
- 183. Succeeded
- 184. Surpassed
- 185. Targeted