The Ultimate Resume Makeover Checklist

Use this comprehensive checklist to transform your resume and catch the attention of recruiters. Go through each section and tick off the items as you complete them.

1. Overall Structure and Format

Resume is limited to 1-2 pages (unless in academia or have extensive relevant experience)

Used a clean, professional font (e.g., Arial, Calibri, Helvetica) in 10-12 point size

Maintained consistent formatting throughout (e.g., same font style for all headings)

Included ample white space with margins of at least 0.5 inches

Organized information in a logical, easy-to-follow order

Used bullet points for easy scanning

Saved resume as both .docx and .pdf formats

2. Contact Information and Personal Branding

Included full name, phone number, email address, and location (city, state)

Added LinkedIn profile URL (make sure it's customized, e.g., linkedin.com/in/yourname)

Included personal website or portfolio link (if relevant)

Removed any unprofessional email addresses (create a new one if necessary)

3. Professional Summary

Crafted a compelling 3-4 sentence professional summary

Highlighted most relevant skills and experiences

Included at least one quantifiable achievement

Tailored summary to the specific job application

4. Work Experience

Listed work experiences in reverse chronological order

Included company name, job title, location, and dates of employment for each position

Used 3-5 bullet points for each role, focusing on achievements rather than duties

Started each bullet point with a strong action verb

Incorporated relevant keywords from the job description

Quantified achievements with specific numbers and percentages

Removed outdated or irrelevant work experiences

5. Skills Section

Created a separate skills section (if appropriate for your industry)

Listed both hard skills (technical abilities) and soft skills

Matched skills to those mentioned in the job description

Organized skills logically (e.g., grouped by type or proficiency level)

Removed outdated or irrelevant skills

6. Education

Listed degrees in reverse chronological order

Included institution name, degree earned, major, and graduation date

Added relevant coursework, academic achievements, or projects (especially for recent graduates)

Removed high school information (unless you're a recent graduate with no college experience)

7. Additional Sections (if applicable)

Included relevant certifications or licenses

Added volunteer work or community involvement

Listed relevant professional associations or memberships

Mentioned language skills (if applicable)

Included relevant awards or honors

8. Tailoring and Optimization

Customized resume for the specific job application

Incorporated keywords from the job description throughout the resume

Ensured that the most relevant experiences and skills are prominently featured

Removed any information that doesn't support your candidacy for this specific role

9. Proofreading and Final Checks

Used spell-check and grammar-check tools

Read the entire resume out loud to catch errors and awkward phrasing

Checked that all company names, job titles, and dates are accurate

Ensured consistent use of punctuation and capitalization

Had a trusted friend or mentor review the resume for feedback

Verified that all links (e.g., LinkedIn, portfolio) are working correctly

10. ATS Optimization

Used a simple, ATS-friendly format without graphics or unusual fonts

Avoided using headers, footers, or text boxes

Spelled out acronyms at least once

Used standard section headings (e.g., "Work Experience" instead of "Where I've Made an Impact")

Final Step

Compared your revamped resume to the original version – celebrate your improvements!

Remember, your resume is a living document. Regularly update it with new skills, experiences, and achievements. Good luck with your job search!

Want more expert career advice? Visit TheCareerCentric.com for the latest tips on job searching, career development, and professional growth.