

Quick Resume Review

Studies show, your resume has about six seconds to make a positive first impression that leads to either a second round of review or an interview. If you make the first cut you may get a longer review of up to a few minutes. Either way, it's critical that you resume pass these very rapid reviews. For that reason, your resume can't be average or you make it harder for the employer to select you for an interview. This resume quick review guide will help ensure your resume gets you past these reviews and on to the interview stage.

The Six Second Review

It's important to remember that many job openings – particularly the really good ones with great facilities, employers, and wages/benefits – get many applicants. There will be times when you are competing with 30-50 other people.

Employers simply don't have time to carefully scrutinize every cover letter and resume. Their initial review is often reduced to a really quick skim (six seconds).

That means they really aren't reading it that closely, unless the visual appearance is different, has a simple and intuitive flow, and simple pulls them in.

Here are five things that will help do that:

1. Color: Nothing will draw the eye faster than color, but it can also repel people's senses if not done tastefully or too much. Stick with one color, and then to add variation to other elements use a shade of that one color at about 25-50% saturation of the original. Generally, use darker colors at the top and bottom to help frame the resume.
2. White Space: A lot of resumes waste large margins of white space around the edges and sometimes in the middle. White space does add to readability and simplicity, but only when used in proper visual balance. Pull your margins out and avoid leaving holes in the middle sections.
3. Headings: The most important section of your resume is your name. I would recommend you set that between 28 and 26 font size and bold. You want your name to be memorable. You also want for the other sections of your resume to be clearly labeled and defined so make the section headers about 14-16 in size and sometimes even bold or underline will help. Other font treatments and sizes will be smaller so that a person can clearly see where sections begin and end.
4. Other Type: For the rest of the type I usually go with between 10-11 in size depending on how well everything fits. Most new graduates have less information and so 11 is often perfect. You also may want to bold or italicize certain sub-section information or details to give the resume character and improve readability.
5. Design Scheme: Use a design scheme. Most resumes you see examples of today online are old school. There's no variation in font size, no color, and no graphics (ie lines, boxes, circles, and other shapes). You have to be careful to not get too crazy with the design. Avoid cheap clip art, huge sections of dark boxes with white text, and other odd patterns. It is a marketing document but keep it professional. And then lastly, consider using your headshot. Clinical resumes that do, simply get better results over those that don't.

The Two-Three Minute Review

Sometimes employers will take a little longer to review your resume when there are fewer applicants or when yours survives a first-round cut. So here are some additional things to review and make sure you are addressing to make the final cut.

- For new dental hygiene graduates seeking a clinical position, one page is plenty. Don't overload or over-complicate your resume. And leave high school content out.
- Resume sections include: Header area; summary statement about you; list of skills/experience; work history; education history; licensure; volunteer work; and references.
- Start your bulleted skills or experience with a verb to jump-start the statement: *Ex. Organized office supplies and helped with new orders*
- Avoid all spelling and grammatical errors. Some employers can be forgiving if there's one error – they may not even spot it. But you don't know who will or won't so don't make any.
- Consistency in type style is also important. Whatever pattern for bolding, sizing, underlining, and italicizing you use, make sure it's consistent throughout the resume.
- I recommend using Microsoft Office's current default font called Calibri. Times New Roman used to be the go-to font, but today it looks antiquated.