



# The Resume Questions We Hear the Most

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(AND OUR BRILLIANT ANSWERS)

# What should I do about my oldest experience?

Depends. How old are we talking? Ten years? 15? 20? In general, we encourage clients to go back only 12-15 years in career history unless the early career stuff is highly relevant to the type of job you're pursuing now (and your more current experience is not). For instance, if you used to work as a retail store manager but have spent the past 10 years in office management... and now want to work at Nordstrom? Leave the retail experience there. Otherwise, take it off.

Certainly, you are proud of your entire career (you should be!) but the reality is that hiring managers and HR people will "do the math" if your dates go back into, say, the '80s. And, if they fear you may retire soon after joining their firm? They may not even interview you.



# **I have gaps in my resume. Should I do a functional resume instead of a chronological one?**

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No. They're hideous. And seriously? Those reviewing your resume will know, immediately, what you're up to. And then they will work to determine what, exactly, you're attempting to conceal.

Also, hiring managers want to know what you've been doing in recent years (and what you're doing now.) When you craft a functional resume – one that highlights your capabilities first and then lists employers without chronology – it doesn't tell the reviewer what you've been up to lately.

This is covered in detail in Module 10.



# Don't I still need a career objective?

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Negatory. Why not? Because most of them say absolutely nothing, so recruiter types tend to simply gloss right over them.

Your Career Summary will cover your value proposition, or the key things you bring to the table. So an objective will just be redundant. Not to mention, the fact that you're sending your resume and cover letter to someone for review should, in and of itself, serve as an adequate statement of your objective: To land that job.




# Why do I need key words?



As we covered in the Weekend Resume Makeover, you need to be very mindful to include appropriate and relevant key words in your resume, for both the human reviewer and the applicant tracking system (ATS). Most mid- to large-sized companies drop incoming resumes right into an ATS. This is a database that an HR person or recruiter uses to store, sort and select resumes from. Typically, the ATS is coded using specific key words from the job description. And then resumes are scanned for these words, phrases and criteria.

Only those resumes that contain a reasonable number of the key words, phrases and criteria will emerge from the ATS. And these are the ones that go on for review by human eyeballs. If you know you're a fit for a particular position, it's always wise to cross check the key terms and phrases in the job description against your own resume. Make sure they line up, as this will maximize the odds that your resume will pass through the ATS and move on for further review.



# Is it really OK for this to be more than one page long?

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This is probably the question we answer with the most frequency. Y-E-S. It's absolutely OK. How or why this myth continues to linger, or why some job advisors still insist that the one-page rule is important, mystifies us. And, as an FYI -- the vast majority of resumes we craft on behalf of clients are two pages long.

If you can create a compelling market document that draws the reader in, showcases you as a top performer and effectively highlights your value proposition all in one page? Great. If not, don't sweat about a two-page resume. Make the words earn their spot, of course, but give yourself permission to go beyond a page if you need to.



# Why is nobody responding to my resume?

Ah, the six-million-dollar question. While we'd need to review your resume and discuss how you're going about job search to answer this question properly, chances are you're going wrong in one of these four areas:

1. Not using appropriate key words and phrases for the types of jobs you're pursuing.
2. Not making your "so what?" or value proposition clear to the reviewer, for the types of jobs you're pursuing.
3. Applying for positions that require credentials that you simply don't possess.
4. Relying solely on online applications and advertised jobs. In today's competitive job market, you've GOT to make bold, strategic, networking-based moves. You've got to design and execute a game plan – one that doesn't rely 100% on passive search methods like applying for every job through a blind mailbox.

# Do I have to list the dates for the positions I've held?

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YES. You can use months/years or just years, but you've got to show chronology.





# Shouldn't I put the Education section first?

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In most cases, the Career Summary should come first. If you have a degree from a prestigious university and/or a degree that may serve as an advantage for the types of positions you're pursuing, then consider listing your education right after the Executive Summary (instead of near the end of the resume).



# Should I include my college graduation year?

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It's not necessary, and can, in fact, hurt you if you are an older job seeker. The only instances we recommend listing the graduation year are: if you're a recent graduate, if you have a degree in progress (In the latter, I suggest mentioning anticipated graduation date/year), or if you need to account for time that appears as a gap on your work history.

The reviewer is typically looking for a specific degree or educational background. They care much less about when the degree was earned.



# If I attended one college but graduated from another, should I list both?

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Generally speaking, this isn't necessary. List university from which you graduated, and name of the degree you earned. Again, the degree is what the reviewer is looking for, not an autobiographical account of the four colleges you hopped to and from before finally graduating.

