

## Writing your Resume

Here at Retail IQ, we read lots of Resumes every week and today I would like to share with you a few of the “golden rules” of preparing an effective Resume.

Let’s keep in mind that your Resume is usually the first point of contact that you will have with your Retail IQ recruitment consultant, so it stands to reason that your Resume forms our first impressions of you.

On the Retail IQ Recruitment facebook, you will see a PDF of a sample resume. If you have not already done so, I suggest that you visit the Retail IQ Recruitment facebook and download and print that sample Resume, as it forms the basis of my discussion with you today.

Firstly, your Resume must be your own work! It should be a reflection of you, your skills, talents, experiences and career goals. When writing your resume, we suggest that you do it from scratch and use your own layout, fonts and content. My job today is to help you with the structure of your Resume, so let’s chat about that now.

Before we start, let’s discuss some basic rules about Resume preparation.

- Rule #1: Do not fall for the “one size fits all” approach. That means, if you are sending your Resume out for a number of roles, it pays dividends to “tailor” your resume a little. More about that later!
- Rule #2: Make sure that your Resume is easy to read. That means use shorter sentences, concise language, and sections, headings and bullet points that help you communicate your message
- Rule #2: Keep your fonts consistent
- Rule #3: Try and keep your Resume to 4 pages or less
- Rule #4: Make sure that your content is concise, accurate, factual and relevant. Don’t fall for the trap of using long fancy words to prove your intellect. It’s a turn-off.
- Rule #5: Keep your resume up to date

Let’s now discuss the title. Every Resume should have the title **Confidential Resume** on the top. **Confidential Curriculum Vitae** is also a very acceptable title, however, these days, it is a little less commonly used.

The next step is to include some personal details. This should include your name, your home address, your contact telephone numbers, your email address and what type of Driver's Licence you have. Your contact telephone number could be your mobile or your home phone number, or both. Needless to say, we do not recommend that you include your telephone number at your current work, as this could lead to some embarrassing situations. If you wish, you can also include your date of birth, however, that's entirely up to you.

We then suggest that you include a **Personal Career Statement**. This is also commonly referred to as a **Career Summary**. This is where you summarise your skills, talent and experiences and, most importantly, your career objectives. Your Personal Career Statement should be concisely worded and focused on your desired outcome.

If you have your sights set on a particular role, we suggest that you build the name of that role into the closing sentence of your Personal Career Statement. For example, your Personal Career Statement might finish with something like..... "The results that I have obtained over the last 6 years as a senior retail manager will ensure that I am ideally suited to the role of Area Manager with ABC Company". This shows that you are a focused individual and have researched the role that you are applying for. It also shows that you have made the effort to "tailor" your Resume for the role that you have applied for and have not spread the same version of your Resume far and wide.

The next step is for you to list your skills and abilities. These could be set up under a title called "Demonstrated Skills". The important thing here is to be concise and not list too many. Some examples of what could be noted under the "Demonstrated Skills" section could include;

- A passion for customer service
- Well developed leadership skills
- A proven track record of achieving sales and margin growth
- A proven ability to build a cohesive team
- Superior inventory management skills
- Excellent merchandising skills
- Accomplished public speaking skills
- A high level of financial literacy

These are examples only. It's important to make these your own. This section could also be referred to as a "high level summary" of your skills and accomplishments. Remember not to list too many points in this section; as that can also be a "turn off"

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The next step is to list at least your last 3 roles. When doing so, remember to include the following information for each role that you have held;

- The date range
- The name of the company that employed you
- The name of the position that you held
- Your key responsibilities
- Your key accomplishments
- Your reason for leaving

It is also a good idea to demonstrate a logical progression from one position to the next. When noting your reason for leaving each role, it's important to show positive reasons for moving on rather than negatives ones.

The important thing to remember here is that most job seekers spend far too much time and space writing about their key responsibilities and not nearly enough time and space writing about their key accomplishments. Let's keep firmly in mind that it's your "accomplishments and results" that really matter and interest potential employers.

Let's chat about this a bit more. When you list your key accomplishments, remember to start with the outcome. Here's an example...Which of the following sounds better?

- A. My initiatives have reduced stock shrinkage by 28% over the last 2 years
- B. I have saved my employer in excess \$18,000 due to the initiatives I have introduced over the last 2 years to reduce stock shrinkage by 28%

Listen to that again and see how much better the second example sounds.

The balance of your resume should comprise of your training and qualifications, any languages spoken in addition to English, your hobbies and interests and your referees. When including your referees, it is totally acceptable to make a note which informs the reader not to make contact your referees until approved by you. Another way of tackling this is to write the words "Referees will be provided upon request". Either way, always do your referees the courtesy of keeping them informed of your job hunting efforts and who may be calling them.

Although we do not recommend that you load your Resume with attachments or enclosures, we do think it is OK to include them as long as they are relevant to the job which you are applying for. For example, if you have undertaken a recognised leadership course and you are applying for a leadership position, it is a good idea to include your certificate of completion.

A few quick words about covering letters. Here are some 'golden rules' to consider when preparing your covering letter;

- First and foremost, they are important. That means that we always recommend that you write one. Keep the length of your cover letter to no longer than 1 page
- Secondly, your covering letter should be "tailored" to the role which you are applying for
- Thirdly, a covering letter should present your "business case" for why you should be considered for the role
- Fourthly, make your covering letter stand out from the rest. If you know someone who works for the company that you are applying for, don't be afraid to mention their name - the more senior the better! However, if you do this, always remember to let them know that you are applying and you have mentioned their name
- Lastly, your cover letter should provide the reader with a solution to their problem. Here's an example..... "If you are looking for a manager who can lift sales, raise morale and strengthen operations, my experience demonstrates that I have done that for my current employer and I will do that for you". This is very powerful and lots of job seekers overlook the effectiveness of this approach

In summary, your Resume says volumes about you! The more work you put into preparing your Resume, the more likely you are to secure the role. We have covered a lot of information here together today. Please feel free to read this document one more time. Alternately, you can watch a Retail IQ video presentation on this same topic on YouTube.

**We are here to help you!** Our Retail IQ Recruitment Consultants are here to assist you with your resume and cover letter preparations. Please do not hesitate to contact your Retail IQ recruitment consultant if you need any help. Thank you