



RISEGUIDE

PREPARE YOUR RESUME

Your resume is the first impression before the first impression, and it has one job: to earn you the interview. Get it right, and the rest follows.

Prepare Your Resume.

Your resume is the first impression before the first impression. And it is fast.

Eye-tracking research from Ladders found recruiters spend an average of about **7 seconds** on the first pass of a resume. That is the same dynamic from the lesson: a snap judgment forms early, then confirmation bias quietly fills in the rest. So the top third of the page does most of the work, and your resume has exactly one job, which is not to get you hired but to get you the interview.

~7 sec

first resume scan

~98%

of Fortune 500 use an
ATS

~250

applicants per role

4-6

reach an interview

Five moves that get you read

Each one mirrors a move from the lesson, applied to the page.

1 Write for the person hiring

Read the posting like a list of problems the team needs solved, then show you are the low-risk answer. Skills can be taught; energy and results cannot be faked.

2 Structure so it survives the scan

One clean column, clear headers, bold job titles, bullets, and white space. Put your title, company, and dates exactly where the eye lands first.

3 Make your headline your "tell me about yourself"

One or two lines at the very top: present, then past, then future, led with energy. The written version of the opener you practiced.

4 Prove impact in every bullet

Strong verb, what you did, and a measurable result. Lead with the outcome, not the duty. Numbers earn the recruiter's eye.

5 Own it on paper

Cut the hedging. "Helped with" becomes "led." Claim your wins plainly, the way presence shows up in a room.

The same three voices from the lesson

The interview coaches apply just as cleanly to the page.



BARBARA CORCORAN

"Always hire attitude over experience."



MATT ABRAHAMS

"Structure sets you free."



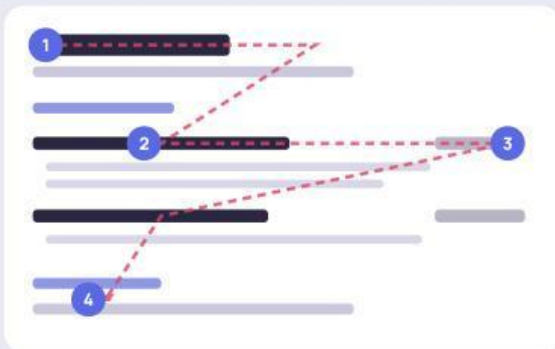
AMY CUDDY

"Fake it till you become it."

Do the homework: pull 5 to 8 exact words and skills straight from the posting and work them in honestly. Most larger employers screen applications with software first, so mirroring their language is how you get past the filter and into human hands.

How your resume gets read

First a machine, then a human who is skimming. Design for both.

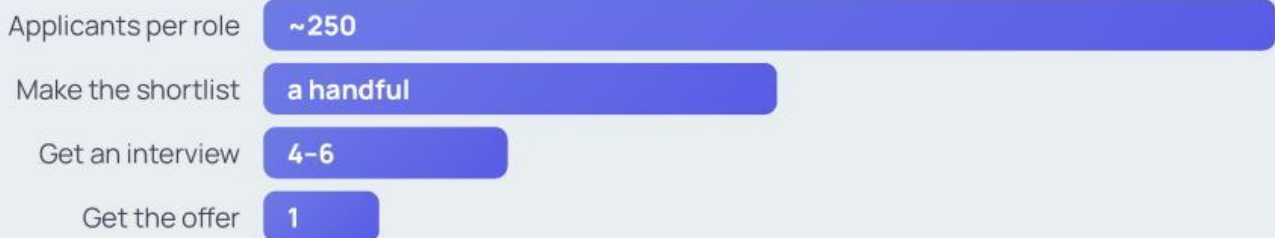


In about seven seconds a recruiter's eyes follow a predictable path. Put the right thing in each spot:

- 1 Your **name** and a target-role title.
- 2 Your **current title and company**.
- 3 Your **dates**, checked for steady progression.
- 4 Your **education**, scanned last.

Before any human looks, software usually screens first. About **98% of Fortune 500 companies** run an applicant tracking system, and it works less like a bouncer and more like a search engine: it ranks resumes by how closely they match the posting. Plain formatting and the right keywords are what get you surfaced.

The funnel you are competing in



A typical posting draws around 250 applicants, and only four to six reach an interview. Your resume's entire job is to move you from the top bar to the second one.

What good and bad look like

The same person could be behind both. Only one gets read. The winner is not fancier, it is clearer.

✓ Gets read

Alex Rivera
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EXPERIENCE

Senior Product Designer, Northwind 2021–Now

- Led a checkout redesign that lifted conversion 24% in one quarter.
- Built a design system now used by 40+ engineers, halving handoff time.

Product Designer, Lumina 2018–2021

- Cut onboarding drop-off 30% with a redesigned 3-step flow.
- Ran research with 60+ users to shape the 2020 roadmap.

EDUCATION

BA Communication Design, TU Berlin 2018

SKILLS

Figma, prototyping, design systems, user research, HTML/CSS

- ✓ One clean column, easy to scan top to bottom.
- ✓ Every bullet leads with a result and a number.
- ✓ Titles and dates clear, reverse chronological.
- ✓ No photo, no clutter, easy for software to read.

✗ Gets skipped

photo

YOUR NAME
Graphic Designer

SUMMARY
Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, hard-working team player seeking a challenging role.

SKILLS
Lorem ipsum · dolor sit · amet

EXPERIENCE

Job Title, Company 2012–2015

- Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit sed diam.
- Ut enim ad minim veniam, quis nostrud exercitation ullamco.

Job Title, Company 2009–2012

- Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit.
- Duis aute irure dolor in reprehenderit in voluptate velit.

EDUCATION

- Diploma, School Name, 2005–2009

REFERENCES

Available upon request.

- ✗ Photo and two columns confuse the software screen.
- ✗ Vague summary built from generic phrases.
- ✗ Bullets describe duties, never results or numbers.
- ✗ "References available upon request" wastes prime space.

Turn duties into wins

Same structure as answering a question in the lesson: lead with the result, then the how, then why it matters.

Strong verb

+

what you did

+

measurable result



a line the recruiter remembers

FEELS FINE · HEADLINE

Hard-working professional seeking a challenging role.



ACTUALLY WINS

Designer who turns messy ideas into products people use. Shipped two from scratch and halved a team's support tickets.

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FEELS FINE · BULLET

Responsible for managing the company's social media.



ACTUALLY WINS

Grew Instagram from 2k to 40k followers in 8 months with a daily short-form series.

Start every bullet with a strong verb

LED & OWNED

Led, Drove, Owned, Directed, Headed, Oversaw

BUILT & CREATED

Built, Designed, Launched, Shipped, Developed, Founded

GREW & IMPROVED

Grew, Boosted, Increased, Accelerated, Streamlined

CUT & SAVED

Cut, Reduced, Slashed, Saved, Eliminated, Automated

DELIVERED

Delivered, Shipped, Closed, Won, Achieved, Hit

INFLUENCED

Convinced, Aligned, Negotiated, Mentored, Trained

No obvious numbers? Find them anyway

- **Scale:** team size, budget, users, tickets, accounts.
- **Frequency:** daily reports, 20 calls a week, monthly releases.
- **Time:** hours saved, faster turnaround, deadlines beaten.
- **Before and after:** from 5 days to 1, from 2k to 40k.
- **Percent:** +30% engagement, -20% churn.
- **Rank:** top 5%, first of 12, best quarter on record.

Anatomy of a strong resume

Same order every time. The higher it sits, the more it matters.

Header	Name, a target-role title, and contact in one clean line.	TOP THIRD
Headline	One or two lines that pitch your best self.	TOP THIRD
Experience	Reverse chronological, results-first bullets.	
Skills	Hard skills that match the posting.	
Education	Degree, school, year.	
Extras	Certifications, projects, languages, only if relevant.	

Recruiters spend most of their seven seconds up top, so your name, title, and single best result belong above the fold.

Tailor it to every job

A one-size resume hides your fit. Mirror each posting instead.



Stronger bullets, by role

The weak version names a duty. The strong version proves a result.

Marketing	Managed the company's social channels: Grew Instagram from 2k to 40k in 8 months with a daily short-form series.
Engineering	Worked on the checkout system: Cut checkout errors 30% by rebuilding the payment flow.
Sales	Responsible for a book of client accounts: Closed 1.2M in new business at 118% of quota in 2023.
Support	Handled customer tickets: Resolved 60+ tickets a day and cut response time from 8h to 2h.
Design	Designed marketing materials: Redesigned onboarding and lifted activation 22%.

Beat the ATS

It is a search engine, not a shredder. Make yourself easy to index.

✓ Reads cleanly

- ✓ A single column, top to bottom.
- ✓ Standard headings: Experience, Education, Skills.
- ✓ A common, readable font.
- ✓ Keywords pulled from the posting.
- ✓ A .docx or a text-based PDF.

✗ Trips it up

- ✗ Tables, columns, and text boxes.
- ✗ Photos, icons, and logos.
- ✗ Skills hidden inside graphics.
- ✗ Key info buried in headers or footers.
- ✗ Fancy fonts and special characters.

Every ATS reads Word and most read PDF, and it ranks rather than rejects. When the posting names a format, follow it.

How long should it be?

Long enough to prove fit, short enough to be read.



Under 5 years

One page. Keep only what is relevant.



5 to 10 years

One to two pages, results led.



10 years+

Two pages, if the content earns it.

A second page is fine when it is full of wins. Never pad to fill space.

The cover letter, in 2026

Often skipped, sometimes decisive. Write one when it can move the needle.

Many recruiters no longer read every cover letter. One 2024 survey of hiring managers found only about a quarter read them regularly, while many skip them entirely. But a short, specific letter still helps in the cases that count, and most systems now index its keywords alongside your resume.

✓ Send one when

- ✓ The posting asks for it.
- ✓ You are changing fields.
- ✓ You have a gap worth explaining.
- ✓ Someone referred you.

✗ Skip or rework when

- ✗ It would be a generic template.
- ✗ It just repeats your resume.
- ✗ There is nowhere to attach it.
- ✗ It runs past one page.

A structure that gets read

1 Open with a hook

One specific line, not "I am writing to apply for the role."

2 Why you fit

One concrete proof tied to their actual need, not a list.

3 Why them

A genuine, specific reason you want this company.

4 Close

A short, confident line that invites the next step.

Aim for about 250 words in three tight paragraphs, and never just restate the resume.

Handling the tricky parts

Address them briefly and move on. Silence invites worse guesses.

Employment gap

Name it in one honest line (caregiving, study, health, a project) and pivot to what you did or learned.

Job hopping

Group short, related roles, lead with results, and let a cover letter explain the pattern when it helps.

Career change

Lead with transferable wins and rework your summary to point clearly at the new field.

Format and file

The details recruiters and software both quietly reward.

LAYOUT

- One page early in your career, two only if genuinely senior.
- Single column. No photo, no tables, no text boxes.
- One clean font at 10 to 12pt, with real white space.

THE FILE ITSELF

- Send a **PDF** so the layout never breaks, unless the posting asks for .docx.
- Name it **Firstname_Lastname_Resume.pdf**.
- Tailor and rename per role, never one generic file.

Words that pull their weight

Adjectives claim. Verbs and numbers prove. Trade one for the other.

✗ Cut these buzzwords

- ✗ Results-driven, results-oriented.
- ✗ Team player, people person.
- ✗ Detail-oriented, hard worker.
- ✗ Go-getter, self-starter.
- ✗ Think outside the box.

✓ Lead with these

- ✓ A strong verb: led, built, grew, cut.
- ✓ A number: 30%, 1.2M, 8 months.
- ✓ A named tool or skill from the posting.
- ✓ A concrete outcome, not a trait.
- ✓ Proof of the soft skill, not the label.

Keep LinkedIn in sync: recruiters check it right after the resume. Match your headline, titles, and dates, and let the profile carry the longer story your one page leaves out.

Cut these

- Objective statements and "references available on request." Both waste the top of the page.
- Generic traits like "team player" or "detail-oriented." Show them through results instead.
- Duties copied from a job description rather than what you achieved.
- Dense paragraphs, tiny margins, and two-column designs that break the scan.
- Typos. Read it aloud, then have one other person check it.
- A skills list stuffed with soft skills. Keep it to hard skills, and prove the soft ones through results in your bullets.
- A run of jobs under six months. Unless they were seasonal, freelance, or contract, they raise questions about staying power.
- Creative, colorful, or center-aligned layouts. They look nice and read badly, for humans and software alike.

Leave these off

Every line should earn its place. These rarely do.

✗ Personal details

- ✗ A photo, unless a local norm requires it.
- ✗ Age, date of birth, marital status.
- ✗ Your full street address; a city is enough.
- ✗ Non-professional social links.

✗ Filler

- ✗ A generic objective statement.
- ✗ "References available on request."
- ✗ Salary history or expectations.
- ✗ Every job you have ever held.

Explaining why you left

Keep the reason off the resume. Have one clean line ready for the interview.

Your resume shows roles and dates, never why you left. Save the explanation for a short cover-letter line or the interview itself. Keep it brief and honest, never criticize a former employer, and always pivot back to what you did and learned.

Laid off	"My role was cut in a restructuring." Common and neutral. State it plainly, then move to your results.
Let go	"It was not the right fit." Keep it short, own your share without blame, and show what you took from it.
You quit	"I had done what I set out to and wanted a bigger challenge." Forward-looking, not a complaint.
Career break	"I stepped away for family, and stayed sharp with freelance projects." Name it once, then move on.

The fastest shortcut: a referral

A warm introduction skips most of the 250-applicant pile.

Find the person

Check LinkedIn for anyone you know at the company, even loosely.

Make it easy

Send them your one-line pitch and the role link so a referral takes seconds.

Follow up once

A short, polite nudge after a week is fine. Then let it rest.

Why it works: referred candidates are far more likely to reach an interview, because a trusted name answers the recruiter's first question for them: is this person a safe bet?

Your 20-minute refresh

Already have a resume? Fix the highest-impact things first, in this order.

1 Rebuild the top third

Name, target title, and a one-line headline that leads with your single best result.

2 Turn five bullets into wins

Take your five weakest duty-bullets and give each a strong verb and a number.

3 Mirror the posting

Paste the job ad and work in five to eight of its exact keywords where they are true.

4 Cut the dead weight

Drop anything over ten years old, plus the objective, the photo, and "references available."

5 Proof it and name it

Read it aloud, fix every typo, and save it as Firstname_Lastname_Resume.pdf.

Your pre-send checklist

Run every one before you hit send. Then let the resume do its one job.

• The top third

- ☐ Title, company, and your single best result are visible instantly.
- ☐ A one or two line headline sits at the very top.

• The bullets

- ☐ Each one starts with a strong verb.
- ☐ Results and numbers, not a list of duties.

• The fit

- ☐ Exact keywords from the job post appear naturally.
- ☐ Tailored to this role, not a generic send.

• The finish

- ☐ One column, clean headers, real white space.
- ☐ Zero typos, saved as a clearly named PDF.

After you hit send

The resume opens the door. These keep it open.

1 Track every application

Log where and when you applied, so follow-ups and tailoring stay easy.

2 Follow up once

If you have a contact, a short, polite note after about a week is plenty. Then let it rest.

3 Keep applying

Fit plus reps wins, not one perfect send. Tailor the next one while this one sits.

4 Prep your stories

Your strongest bullets are interview answers waiting to happen. That is where Win the Interview begins.

5 No callbacks? Fix the top first

If a week of applying goes quiet, rework the top third and the keywords before touching anything else.

Get the interview here. Your headline becomes your spoken "tell me about yourself," and your strongest bullet becomes the objection-killer story you keep loaded. Then Win the Interview takes it from the moment you walk in.