

# THE HUFFINGTON POST

## THE BLOG

# A Recruiter Comes Clean: If Your Résumé Misses These Four Points, I May Not Even Look at It

06/01/2016 04:06 pm ET | Updated 11 minutes ago



Like 0



Tom Brennan [f](#) [t](#)

Tom Brennan is senior writer at leading nationwide recruiting firm Decision Toolbox.



WWW.GOOGLE.COM

Learn how to make your resume stand out with tips from a seasoned recruiter.

Your résumé is your agent, your professional avatar in the job market, but if it doesn't follow these guidelines, it may not make it past a recruiter's first review. Like everyone else, recruiters' tactics and tools are geared for efficiency. If you know how things work, you can optimize your résumé to maximize your chances.

## 1. The Ten-Second Rule

If you are lucky, that's about how much time your résumé has to catch a recruiter's attention; however, if I spot a few key things, I'll spend more time with it and look deeper.

I do like to see a précis of what you offer, right at the top of the résumé. “Précis” is the perfect word. Think of it as a tweet and keep it under 500 characters. An added bonus is that this is a good place to list some key skills that may not be mentioned elsewhere in your résumé.

Here’s an example:

“Results-oriented professional with 10 years of experience leading successful cross-functional teams in critical IT operations. Track record of success developing and implementing innovative solutions and efficiencies. Senior level champion of change with the people skills to gain consensus and buy-in on new processes. Proven ability to build and lead high performance teams to achieve and exceed goals.”

## **2. Help the Search Engines Help You**

Recruiters use search engines extensively, and optimizing your résumé will help it climb to the top of the search results. Marketing uses search engine optimization (SEO) and you’re marketing yourself, right? Under your précis, put a list of terms that characterize your talents and experience. If your terms match those I’m using to find candidates, chances are good that I’ll be looking at your résumé. Repeating key terms is good, as long as it doesn’t become obviously repetitive. In this example, for a sales professional, “sales” appears four times.

Consultative Sales · Account Management · B2B Sales · Negotiations · Relationship Management · International Business · Enterprise Sales · Networking · Prospecting · Pipeline Management · Leading Sales Teams · Salesforce.com

## **3. Leave the Fancy Stuff to Iggy Azalea**

When I download your résumé into my applicant tracking system (ATS), a machine scans it in. If the formatting is too complex, it can work against you. For example, please do not capitalize your name, and it may look good to put spaces between each letter (such as “D U N C A N T A Y L O R”), but the ATS is unlikely to scan it correctly. Columns and text boxes are not database-friendly, either. Your résumé can still be attractive without the window dressing.

## **4. “Don’t Mistake Activity with Achievement”**

That’s excellent advice from record-setting coach John Wooden. Titles, education and training are all great, but nothing out-classes accomplishments. For each company you list, provide a brief summary of the company’s mission and size to set the context. Follow that with a sentence or two about your key responsibilities. Now the meaty part: list three to six key accomplishments — goals you achieved or exceeded.

Include real numbers rather than percentages to help me assess the level of responsibility you’ve held. “Increased revenue by \$50,000” is more insightful than, “increased revenue by 20%.” Other helpful numbers: the size of the team you led, the extent of the budget you managed, the revenue targets for which you were responsible.

## **5. Free Bonus Tips**

- Keep your résumé to two pages. No recruiter will read past that.
- Put your education at the bottom, unless it's directly relevant to the position you seek, such as a degree in Mechanical Engineering or an MBA.
- Some recommend that you “tailor” your résumé to each application. However, be careful about over-customizing it if you want the company to consider you for other positions.
- Make sure that you have a full LinkedIn profile with dates and information that matches your resume, we do cross reference.
- This should go without saying, but you might be surprised at how many résumés have typos. Real example: “Attention to detale.” Proofread it yourself and then ask a friend to proofread it.

In short, to set your résumé up for success, simplify and streamline the formatting, and let your accomplishments speak for themselves . . . but make sure the language is clear and succinct.

—

*Duncan H. Taylor Ph.D., senior recruiter and project manager for [Decision Toolbox](#) contributed to this [article](#). He leverages more than 20 years of recruiting experience to help companies of all sizes land top talent. Connect with Duncan on LinkedIn [here](#).*