

From former student Stith Keiser, current owner of MyVeterinarycareer.com

Gone are the days when posting a resume online will land you a job. Today's job market is a tight one, yet employers are still hiring new graduates that can prove they bring something exceptional to the table. The US government recently announced that for every job posting, there are six applicants. In many industries, that number is higher. We routinely receive upwards of 25 resumes for each position we have available. Few employers have time to interview 25 candidates so it's essential that you use your resume to get your foot in the door.

Most employers will decide within 10-15 seconds of seeing a resume whether or not they will even read the remainder. With such a short window of time to make an impression, there is no room for error. Follow the below pointers to ensure your resume stands out!

## **Format**

### **Alignment**

Left alignment is familiar and much easier to read therefore keep everything in a resume aligned left.

### **Spacing**

- It is better to have your resume exceed a page in length and include white space (along the margins and between sections), than to scrunch all of your information on one page with no space.
- Leaving appropriate space will allow the reader's eyes to take in critical information marked with bullet points.

### **Bullet Points**

'Bullet points' are utilized to draw attention to YOUR accomplishments. Do not overuse 'bullet points' or they will lose their meaning and value.

### **Font**

- Times New Roman is preferred and has been proven to be 30% easier to read.
- Generally, number 14 or number 12 font is used for 'Titles', and number 11 font is used for everything else .

### **Margins and Spacing**

Resumes need to be a minimum of 1 inch around the sides and bottom, and 0.5 inch at the top

### **Numerals**

'Zero' to 'nine' are spelled out, 10 and above can be written numerically.

### **Personal Pronouns**

Personal pronouns ("I," "we," "our," "my," "their," "his," "her") are Not used in resumes. Instead, use verbs such as:

- "Increased sales..."
- "Conducted employee reviews..."

## Content

### Headings

Resumes typically include the following headings:

- Professional Summary
- Education
- Work Experience
- Related Activities/Interests
- Awards and Honors
- References

### Do Away with “Objective” and replace with “Professional Summary”

- Located beneath your name and contact information, we look for a “Professional Profile” or “Professional Summary.” This space was formerly reserved for the “Objective,” but objectives are self-centered and only tell the employer what you want, not what you can do for them.
- A profile is your first opportunity to summarize, in a few sentences, what you can bring to the table for your employer. For example:
  - Bad example – *To obtain a position as a veterinarian at a progressive small animal practice.*
    - As an employer, I read this and think “duh, you’re looking for a position, otherwise you wouldn’t have sent in your resume.”
    - Don’t use “progressive” – Who doesn’t want a “progressive” practice? Instead of using progressive, define what “progressive” means to you.
    - All the above tells me is what you want, not what you can do for my practice.
  - Good Examples -
    - *To gain mentorship and practice high-quality medicine and surgery to all species using radiology, theriogenology, neonatology, lameness evaluation, preventative medicine, dentistry, orthopedics, and emergency and critical care medicine. To provide excellent service to clients through clear and consistent communication.*
    - *Mature graduate with hands-on large animal background seeks opportunity in the equine field. Possesses several years experience in ranch management and production. Primary interests include lameness, internal medicine, and emergencies.*

### “Work Experience”

- Keep it SMART
  - Specific, Measurable, Action-oriented, Results-oriented and Time-based
    - Bad Example: *Completed an externship working with two mixed animal practitioner.*
    - Good, though not perfect, Example: *Worked directly under two mixed animal practitioners gaining more experience in large and small animal handling (emphasis on equine as it was an area of interest of the veterinarian who owned the practice), allowed to perform various technical procedures including IV catheterization of large and small animals, injection treatments, surgical preparation, equine lower limb radiographs and various body fluid tests.*
  - As an employer, I want to know specifically what skills you learned, if you were able to apply them, and if so, what you achieved.

### **“Related Activities/Interests”**

I frequently get asked whether or not to include activities and interests in a resume. I don't know that there is a definite “yes” or “no” answer, but I do favor them for one simple reason: You being happy at my practice (and therefore putting down roots and becoming productive) also means that you have to be happy with the area. Contrary to popular belief, money will not make you happy in the long-run if you hate where you work. A work/life balance keeps us from getting burned out and so in addition to knowing that you're a fit for my practice, I want to make sure our community offers the activities that you enjoy in your free time.

If I owned a practice in a rural or small town setting, I wouldn't hire a veterinarian who possessed all the technical skills in the world if their interests revolved around the amenities or extracurricular activities associated with large metropolitan areas.

### **“Awards/Honors”**

Keep them relevant and if the name of the award/honor doesn't describe why it's applicable, explain it.

### **“References”**

I like to see three professional references. You're welcome to include your pastor or a family member, but don't count it as one of the three professional references.

I receive between three and five resumes each and every single day from new graduates interested in working through our company. Therefore, I've seen “the good, the bad and the ugly!” For the next few months, several thousand new graduates will be pounding the pavement, sending out resumes left and right and I can confidently tell you that the graduates who make a strong first impression, via their resume, will receive the opportunity to interview. An interview does not guarantee you a job, but it's one more step you've got to reach and your resume will take you there.