



## Why You Need a Resume

The most obvious reason why you might need a resume is when you're looking for a job. But there are many other reasons why you might want to put together a resume now, even if you're not actively seeking new employment.

Your employment situation can change in a heartbeat — the company may be acquired, or sold, or go out of business. A great boss may leave for a new position — and maybe he wants you to come with him. Or maybe his replacement wants to bring in his own people.

Even if you don't need a resume to apply for a position online, it is useful to have a well-organized, neatly formatted document to hand to the hiring manager at the beginning of an interview. The resume can also serve as “talking points” to guide the content of an interview. The time invested in compiling information on your credentials, skills, and accomplishments can also help prepare you for the job interview itself.

Your current employer may even request a resume from you — for example, to include in a proposal the company is preparing for a new contract. It's not uncommon for key personnel bios to be included in a response to a Request for Proposal (RFP) or applications for grants.

If you want to apply for an internal promotion or transfer, you may not think a resume would be required, but often, it is. An internal recruiter or a hiring manager in a different part of a big company isn't going to be familiar with all the aspects of what you do — and even if they have access to the job description for your position, that won't tell them about the specific contributions that you've made in your current role. It's your job to quantify and document your achievements — and a resume is a good way to do that, even for an internal position.

A good time to create — or update — your resume is when you are preparing for an annual performance review. Documenting your accomplishments can help you prepare to show your manager how you've added value to your position — and department — since your last review.

The resume development process is also a good time for self-assessment. A well-written resume tells the “story” of your career — demonstrating consistent themes and supporting information that highlights your qualifications for the job target you're seeking, while omitting irrelevant information and positions.

Outside of an employment context, you may also be asked for a resume if you're going to be a speaker for an organization or an event, so they can use the resume to create your bio and speaker's introduction.

Individuals being considered for a political appointment — for example, a state government committee or board — will likely be asked for their resume. The same is true for individuals being considered for key volunteer roles — for example, if you are asked to be on a nonprofit's board of directors. You may also be asked for a resume if you are being considered for an award — or being given an award in recognition of your work or volunteer efforts.

Resumes are also a tool for networking. Someone you just met who is interested in learning more about you may ask for your resume. This contact may help lead you to unadvertised job openings. In the same way, getting your resume in the hands of someone who knows you well can also lead to new opportunities. They can use the resume to pass along to other people who might be in a position to hire you, or to use as a “door opener” to introduce you to other people who might be useful in your job search.

The resume can also be used as a tool to market yourself. If you work in a service-oriented position, your skills, education, and expertise are a critical part of what makes you credible to potential clients. Having a resume — or a bio based on your resume — that communicates why you are a good choice to provide the service can help fill your appointment book, especially for therapists, clinicians, coaches, and teachers. A document that showcases your credentials can be an important part of your company or practice's marketing materials.

Resumes are important at any age. A resume can be a good resource for high school students applying for scholarships and to include with college applications. It can be updated throughout the college years and be used to apply for internships and part-time jobs. And, of course, once you graduate from college, you'll likely need a resume to apply for your first job.

It's also important to note that a LinkedIn profile is not a substitute for a resume. Because a LinkedIn profile is public (even if you have your privacy settings locked down on LinkedIn, someone can still take a screenshot of your profile or create a PDF of it), there may be information that you do not want to include on your LinkedIn profile that can help demonstrate your accomplishments to a prospective employer. In addition, a resume can be customized to target a specific position, while you can only have one LinkedIn profile.

Furthermore, a well-written resume can actually help you populate your LinkedIn profile, making it easy to complete the "Work Experience" and "Education" sections.

### **Why To Update Your Resume Now**

One of the most common reasons to update your resume when you're not actively looking for a job is because you don't have a good feeling about your current situation. Is there a lot of turnover in your current job or the company overall? Have there been rumors of layoffs, or did the company just lose a big contract? Both of these can signal a need for a resume update.

On the other hand, what if your department — or your company — is doing very well? In that case, you may be contacted by competitors — or recruiters working for competitive companies — looking to hire you away from your current job.

Putting together your resume can also help you determine where you want to go next in your career. Sometimes, looking at your work history can help you identify a pattern in your employment history that will help you determine where you want to go next in your career. An effective resume communicates both your current skills and qualifications *and* your future potential. Identifying a common thread in your experience and accomplishments can help you decide the next step in your career.

The same exercise can also help you identify where you may need to enhance your current skills or education. If you're putting together your resume and you realize your last certification or in-depth training was more than 10 years ago, it may prompt you to look at how you can bring your skills up-to-date in a key area.

A resume can also help you if you're considering a career change. Your resume can highlight transferable skills targeted towards a new career goal. The new document can also help you identify any deficiencies that you may need to work on strengthening as you pursue a different type of job or career path.

Having your resume prepared by a professional resume writer can also provide you with a sense of how you are seen by others. A third-party validation of your accomplishments — put together in an attractive, easy-to-read, modern format — can give you confidence. It can also provide reassurance that you have marketable skills — and that you would likely land on your feet should your current position be eliminated.

### **Why To Keep Your Resume Updated**

The main reason to create — and maintain an — updated resume is that it takes time to put a good resume together — whether you're writing it yourself, or having a professional prepare it for you. A resume is not just an “obituary” of your work history — it's not a summary of everything you've done — it's a strategic marketing document that showcases your value to a prospective employer.

It's easier to maintain a resume than to scramble to put one together, especially when a new opportunity arises and you need to give someone your resume on short notice. Even if you don't keep your resume fully updated, keep track of your accomplishments. Use a work journal to track your accomplishments (including a file folder to keep copies of emails or letters of appreciation from customers, co-workers, or your boss). You can also maintain an electronic record: forward “kudos” emails to your personal email address (change the subject line so it's easy for you to find these later) and email yourself notes about project specifics — especially scope-and-scale information like percentages, numbers, and dollar figures.

How often should you update your accomplishments? As often as necessary. For some, that may mean weekly updates (for example, if you're working on a series of projects); for others, that could mean a quarterly assessment. The most important thing is to take the time to do this on an ongoing basis. Put an alarm or task reminder on your calendar so you remember to set aside the time to track your accomplishments regularly. This will make it much easier to update your resume.

Coming up with accomplishments will also help you prepare for a job interview. Anytime you are asked to “describe a time when you...” or “give me an example of when you...” that is an opportunity to share a story in CAR format: Challenge-Action-Result.

First, describe the *Challenge* — or situation — that you faced. Next, identify and articulate the specific *Actions* you took to resolve the situation. Finally, outline the *Results* your actions brought about — specifically quantifying them in terms of measurable numbers, percentages, or dollars, when possible. Including CAR statements on your resume — and preparing them to discuss in an interview — is a valuable exercise.

Even if you keep your resume updated, you may still need to re-target it for different kind of opportunities that may arise, but it’s easier to re-work an existing resume than to start from scratch. You may decide to keep a “master” resume document that contains all of your credentials (including a full list of your continuing education classes and workshops, for example), but editing the list down to meet the needs of a specific position.

If you don’t have a resume, [it’s time to get one](#); and if you have one, but it hasn’t been updated in a while, now is the time to bring it up to date. You never know when you might need your resume, and you want it ready when you do.

We hope you have found this information of assistance.

*Roslyn Brinkley - Your recruitment performance partner*

**(m) 0450 295 365**

[roslyn@improveyourgroove.com.au](mailto:roslyn@improveyourgroove.com.au)

[Website](#) ▶ [Facebook](#) ▶ [LinkedIn](#) ▶ [Twitter](#)