

ENGINEERING CAREER FEATURE

Tips on Creating the Perfect Engineering Resume

What Is an Engineering Resume?

Some engineers wrongly assume that a standard resume will be enough to get an engineering job. But actually engineering resumes are pretty distinctive, in terms of structure and content. Contrary to generic resumes, engineering resumes should emphasize on skills, achievements, and projects. Since most of the engineering recruiters use scanning software to sort and save resumes, your resume must include a lot of industry buzzwords.

How to Write a Successful Engineering Resume

Whether you are writing a new resume or revising an existing one, you just cannot assume that the standard rules apply. After all you are an engineer! And while you are undoubtedly a good engineer, there will be hundreds of talented engineers applying for the same job. What works for most professionals won't necessarily work for an engineering resume. For example, resumes are typically structured in a chronological format, but because the field of engineering is very project-oriented, it's better to list important projects, achievements, and skills first. Below are some tips on creating an engineering resume that will lead to all important interviews:

1. Be Specific

By the nature of the work, most engineers are able to think outside the box. So don't bore potential employers with those generic phases. If you list your ability to successfully work on multiple projects simultaneously, provide a one or two line example from your past work history to backup your claim.

2. Use Keywords

Though it's very important that your resume be written in reader-friendly language that makes sense to hiring managers, it's also possible that your resume will be scanned for specific keywords. Scanning is becoming very common, especially in technical professions such as engineering, and if your resume is found lacking, it may not move on. Make sure you weave in your qualifications, certifications, and experience that are outlined in the job posting, mimicking the posting's language where it makes sense.

3. Select the Best Organizational Format

Most resumes are written in chronological format, but that does not mean the chronological choice is best for you. A combination format may be the best. The combination format is evenly balanced between skill description, achievements, and employment history, with the advantage being that projects can be highlighted for greater impact.

4. Make Sure Your Document Is Error Free

An error in resume can often be the killer between two closely-matched candidates. Engineers are expected to be detail-oriented so an error in the engineering resume reflects badly on possible future performance.

5. Define Your Objective

If you include an objective at the top of your resume, make sure it fits for the job you are applying for. For example, if you are submitting a resume for an aeronautical engineering position, but your objective details your aspiration to move into environmental engineering, your resume won't get a second glance. Not only does it broadcast the fact that you don't know or don't care what the job listing said, but employers will assume that you don't intend to stick around for the long haul.

6. Keep It Positive

Reason for leaving a job, setbacks, failed initiatives, etc. don't have a place on an engineering resume. Employers are seeking people who can contribute, have a positive attitude, are enthusiastic, and have successfully performed similar job skills in the past. Concentrate on communicating these issues and avoid any detracting information.

7. Give Good Stuff

Cover letters are important, but ask any hiring manager, and they will tell you that they skip cover letters more often than they read them. So don't hold back any of your accomplishments from your resume, thinking that you need something fresh for the cover letter. Always list the important information on your resume.

Steps for Writing an Engineering Resume

Step 1: Include details of your positive impact in past engineering positions with attention to supervisory responsibilities, capacity building, and team work; projects that you participated in that resulted in improved results and presentations; or other interaction with clients, peer groups, and intra-company groups.

Step 2: Write your resume at the level that another engineer, including a prospective supervisor, would understand. Don't let it down, since ultimately it will be reviewed by individuals at your level and you will do yourself far more harm by watering it down for HR personnel than by making it too technical.

Step 3: Begin your resume with a clean presentation of your name and contact information, including address, email, home phone, and cell numbers.

Step 4: Communicate the precise electrical engineering job you are seeking in the "Objective" section that uses language that conforms to the specific words used to advertise that job.

Step 5: List the most recent and most relevant positions you have held under the

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heading of "Employment History" with years served, employer, highest job title attained, and a brief statement of the responsibilities and work performed.

Step 6: Include all relevant degrees, specializations, course study, and distinctions, with highest-level work first, under the heading of "Education."

Step 7: Present your academic engineering dissertation or thesis or any other relevant publications under a "Publications" section, with a full description of the thrust of your work in up to two sentences.

Step 8: Write a personable but professional single-page cover letter that highlights something from your resume that you wish to emphasize and answers any questions that you anticipate might keep you from getting an interview if left unanswered.

Step 9: Highlight applicable hardware, software, language, and technical proficiencies and certifications under the heading "Technical Proficiencies," with a statement of important product applications where appropriate.

Step 10: Also try to include references in that particular organization that you are applying for. If you don't have any references, then do not include that particular section in the resume.

Additional Resume Categories

Additional categories which can add a great deal to your resume to highlight special knowledge and skills include: Accomplishments, Bibliography, Interests, Languages, Internship Experience, Scholarships, Training, Leadership Activities, Presentations, Technical Skills, and Volunteer Activities, among others.

Appearance and Length

The resume must look professional and be aesthetically pleasing, as the resume

appearance is often a major factor in getting the employer's attention. The resume should be concise and direct, with material presented in a clear, easy-to-follow format. Font sizes should remain in the 10-14 point range and for most students and recent graduates, a one-page resume is standard. Create visual impact using bolded and/or capital letters. The use of underlining and italics can affect the ability to scan one's resume, so avoid these options. Hard copy applications should be printed on high-quality paper of neutral color, using matching paper for the resume, cover letter, and envelope.

Important Things to Note

It is important to put a large amount of preparation into a resume, because they are often the determining factor in getting an interview. Upon locating good positions, it may be helpful to list the skills or experiences necessary for every career. Next, create a list of personal knowledge and abilities, and compare the lists to ensure compatibility. Group the related requirements and skills under headings similar to employer requirements, and be sure to include them in the resume. Once this information has been gathered, candidates must then decide on a resume format. Functional resumes are best for candidates who have past job titles that are vague and do little to highlight their capabilities, but chronological resumes are often chosen to represent candidates interested in engineering careers. Resumes are designed to inform employers of how a candidate will be an asset to their organization. It is important that all information be legible and organized. Knowledge and experience is best organized if it is listed in reverse chronological order, meaning the most recent activities are presented first.

Few Tips to Produce a Good Cover Letter

A cover letter is not an autobiography. It should be short and sweet, brief, and to the

point. The cover letter and resume should demonstrate that you meet or exceed the requirements listed in the job description, that you are interested in the position, and that you are available. Any additional information is superfluous and can be counterproductive.

- Negatives are best delivered in person so that your personality and humanity can counter them. If a recruiter or hiring manager likes your resume and wants additional information, she'll schedule an interview.
- A salary history is more likely to cost you a job than not. If the job ad says that resumes without a salary history will not be considered, give a historical salary range and state that your salary requirements are flexible.
- It should be easy to scan and have a logical progression. Bunched up text in long paragraphs will frustrate anyone who has to review hundreds of resumes and cover letters a week. Don't repeat your resume. Your cover letter is not a summary of your resume—listing previous employers and job roles can be counterproductive.
- Most employers hire people because the employer needs to accomplish a task—not because they want to provide employment opportunities to the public. Your cover letter should be solution-centric. Keep the "I would like stuff" to a minimum.

Areas This Article Covers

This engineering resume article is compatible for the following engineering fields: Electrical Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, Controls Engineering, Computer Engineering, Mining Engineering, Aerospace Engineering, Biomedical Engineering, Civil Engineering, Environmental Engineering, Geological Engineering, Instrumentation Engineering,



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Network Engineering, Nuclear Engineering, Petroleum Engineering, Piping Engineering, Process Engineering, Safety Engineering,

Telecom Engineering, Welding Engineering. Also, other types of engineering students can get help from this article.

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