



# Résumés: Trends and Truths

Where the primary job search tool may be headed.

Did you know, Leonardo da Vinci is credited with writing the first résumé in 1482? Seeking work from the future duke of Milan, da Vinci selectively highlighted his professional competencies, relevant skills, and deliverables in a document respectfully addressed to Ludovico Sforza. Like a savvy job seeker, he focused on meeting his potential employer's needs and interests, offering military innovations and solutions to secure the city, plus use of his talents as architect, sculptor, and painter to transform Milan into the jewel of Europe. No surprise, the duke became a long-time patron, later commissioning da Vinci for *The Last Supper*.

Résumés have come a long way in 500+ years. Today, they are job search must-haves, follow specific formats, and no longer include criteria like “age,” “weight,” and “religion.” Plus, they continue to evolve. Therefore, job seekers need to carefully balance time-tested standards with current trends if they hope to land that coveted first interview.

## What works best

**Trend:** Sending résumés as interactive documents, infographics, and video profiles.

**Truth:** Paper isn't dead. Many recruiters still prefer hard copies, which can also be handed out at events and interviews, and delivered in person. Plus, paper and conventional digital résumé formats work with Applicant Tracking System (ATS) screening software. While multi-media, QR codes, and infographic résumés are cool, they are not ATS friendly. Also, video profiles may be gaining acceptance but have not yet replaced résumés. Bottom line: writing, organizational, and layout skills are still needed. Have a traditional résumé as a backup, and follow the employer's instructions when submitting.

## Whose wants vs whose needs?

**Trend:** Replacing the Objective with Qualification/Skills Summaries and Branding Statements

**Truth:** While often viewed as self-serving statements that focus on *your* needs rather than the employer's, Objectives remain useful for those with limited work experience. Qualification/Skills statements emphasize what you bring to the table, while

Branding Statements are compact, phrase-rich descriptions that advertise *how* you can use your skills and experience to benefit the employer. As entry-level talent, consult with your advisor.

## More less is more

**Trend:** Introducing color to headlines, more creative layouts and fonts, and graphics

**Truth:** Use of design and creativity is industry relative, often more suited to the artistic fields. Corporate professions still prefer traditional formats, which work in ATS screening. Fancy fonts and charts don't scan well, or at all, so you'll still need a traditional printable résumé. However, some experts suggest using more modern fonts like Calibri and Cambria instead of Times New Roman when crafting a résumé in Word, or injecting some font color to draw attention to key points.

## Experience vs Education

**Trend:** Moving Qualifications to the top and Education further down the page

**Truth:** Résumés are skimmed, so put your most important info—contact details, qualifications, achievements—toward the top 1/3. Students/grads are likely to list their recent degrees and education first; those with more extensive experience are better served focusing on Qualifications, as employers are usually more interested in work background than in alma maters.

## The right connections

**Trend:** Adding professional and social media links to the contact information

**Truth:** Expect the majority of employers to search for you online to validate your credentials. A LinkedIn profile or your own branded website will score higher than a Yahoo, Hotmail, or AOL email. Also, make sure your College Central résumé and career portfolio are both searchable.



## i n a nutshell:

To convey your relevancy and qualifications in changing times, your résumé should:

- **Show you're tapped in to industry formats and language**
- **Be flexible in format, and make use of technology only when appropriate**
- **Never let style or trends overwhelm its message and readability**
- **Be easy to read by both humans and machines**
- **Focus on the employer's needs; present critical info at the top**
- **Build on your professional social media presence**

The truth is, regardless of trends, a résumé that makes it easy for an employer to assess your fit is the résumé that will most likely land you that interview—and quickly.