

## Career Tip: When it Comes to Resumes, Keep it Simple

Douglas Fine  
The Financial Executives  
Consulting Group, LLC

**A**s the recipient of numerous resumes, I continue to find that at least 30 percent are problematic. Even if you think you have a perfect resume, please read on — you might just be surprised.

My most basic suggestion is: **Keep it Simple.** The worst problem I have with the resumes sent electronically is that people try to be too creative and fancy with formats. This is fine for a resume you are printing and presenting to someone on paper, but it is not acceptable for a resume you plan to send via e-mail. What looks fine on your PC screen will very often look much different on the recipient's PC or when she prints it.

This may be caused by different versions of Word, and the fact that every printer has a different print driver — some printers have many versions of their print driver. I frequently receive resumes that clearly were meant to be two pages, but wind up as three or four on my end, with two of the pages having only one or two lines on them.

Some tips to follow when formatting your resume are:

- Keep your margins wide — one inch all around is usually safe
- Use 12-point type; if it is a problem use 11-point type, but nothing smaller
- Use Times New Roman or Arial as your font; other fonts may not be installed on the recipient's computer, which can result in an unsuitable font substitute
- Try to limit the resume to two pages; any employment information beyond five or 10 years is of little importance to most recruiters and hiring managers
- Read the instructions in the lead or advertisement, and follow them carefully; if it says to respond only by e-mail, do not call or fax; if it says to only attach a resume, do not attach a cover letter and list of professional affiliations
- Do not use tables; this causes me more problems than any other issue when I try to print a resume
- Keep your cover letter or e-mail fairly short; your resume should stand on its own for the most part; it is unlikely that a recruiter will send the cover to the client — normally only the resume will be forwarded
- Be sure your name is on every page of the resume; there is a chance that the printed pages could get separated



- If you are using a functional resume, I strongly suggest that you query some recruiters and hiring managers about it. Many recruiters believe that the functional resume is used to “hide something” in the candidate's background.
- Save the resume file with your last name as the document title. Do not name it resume.doc or, even worse, revisedresume35.doc. The people who receive resumes by e-mail may receive several, or even hundreds per day. You want yours to be recognizable with as little effort as possible.
- Be sure to include your full name and contact information in the e-mail cover note. If I get an e-mail from an e-mail address like GoDiamondbacks2001@AOL.com and the person just signs the e-mail, “regards, Joe” the only way to figure out who sent it is to open the attached resume file. I will do it, but find it pretty annoying. A recruiter who gets hundreds of notes a day may just hit the delete key rather than waste his time.
- Be sure to proofread the resume, cover letter and e-mail message; the spell check function does not catch grammar and syntax errors.

If you are the member of an association or trade group, check to see if it has a resume review service. The fee is usually discounted and well worth the cost. I assure you, every resume can be improved. ▀

Douglas Fine is managing director for The Financial Executives Consulting Group (FECG), with primary responsibility for the firm's Internal Audit and Accounting Practice. He is also chairman of The Financial Executives Networking Group's Internal Audit Special Interest Group. [Dougfine@TheFECG.com](mailto:Dougfine@TheFECG.com)

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