

How Long Should Your Resume Be?

Don't reduce the font size and increase the margin on your resume to shrink it to two pages.



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Three-page resumes are certainly not extinct, but they should be rare.

Professional resume writers urge their clients to first try to trim their resumes down to a maximum of two pages. One instance in which a three-pager might be appropriate would be if a job seeker were to transition from one field to another. In such cases, a resume must cover both sets of a candidate's skills, qualities and experiences: i.e., the set that pertains to field A and the set that pertains to field B.

Don't be surprised if a resume writer still tries to talk you out of a three-pager even if you're giving up your life as, say, a database administrator to instead become a plumber. "I told [one such client that] we've got to think of shaving something off here," said Steve Burdan, a certified professional resume writer who works with TheLadders. "You've got to try to do your best to keep your resume to two pages."

With those parameters, a job seeker has to be extremely particular about what job experiences, accomplishments and other components make the cut and get into the resume. Burdan recommends shaving from the bottom, delving into the oldest part of the resume to trim down or even eliminate the most out-of-date elements.

Text size and font

In trying to reduce a resume to two pages, few can resist the temptation to squeeze in more into less by shrinking text size or page margins. But while these tricks can compress your resume down to two pages, they can also make your resume difficult to read.

The basic parameters of a readable resume include keeping text size to a minimum of 10 or 10.5 points. Likewise, margins should be no smaller than .5 inch.

While you're formatting text, pay attention to the style, also known as the font, of the text. There are a handful of classic fonts that are considered professional and are hence safest to use: Arial, Garamond, Tahoma, Times New Roman or its related Times brethren, or Courier Gothic.

Burdan recommends that a job seeker avoid using "kooky, crazy fonts" and "kooky, crazy graphics," unless they're in advertising or graphic arts and think that a given client would appreciate a font out of the norm, or unless the font is an integral part of a graphic package put together by such a job seeker.