



How to Write Powerful and Memorable HR Resumes

7 ways to showcase your talents and accomplishments.

No matter how many thousands of resumes you've reviewed throughout your HR career, you are likely to still find it difficult to write your own. Like anyone else, you need to step back and look at your career objectively. What will make people remember you? Why will others want to hire you? What can you bring to an employer that no one else can?

While there's no single formula or template to use in crafting an effective HR resume, we offer some guidelines that will help you showcase your greatest talents and accomplishments.

1. USE A WELL-BRANDED HEADLINE

Of course, your resume will start with your name and contact information (phone number and live links to both your e-mail address and LinkedIn profile) prominently positioned at the top of the page. Then create a headline statement that tells readers who you are professionally with regard to your current career objective. Readers should instantly see whether you're a generalist, specialist or senior executive. Your headline replaces the now outdated "Career Summary" or "Professional Profile" heading you may have used in the past.

Think about adding one or two subheadings to further define your expertise. Do you have an industry specialization? Any distinguishing credentials? Experience with a hot-button HR issue? With just a few words, you can convey what sets you apart from other candidates.

Be certain to highlight not only what you've done in the past but also what you want to do in the future. This is extremely important because you want readers to perceive you as qualified for the positions you're targeting.

If you have extensive experience managing compensation and benefits, for example, but you don't want that to be a major part of your next job, don't note it in your headline. Rather, simply mention it as appropriate in the experience section. Be selective and be strategic.

2. SHARE DETAILS ABOUT WHERE YOU'VE WORKED

Help your readers understand the depth and breadth of your experience by providing details about the organizations where you've worked. You can cite the number of employees, locations,

total annual revenue, specific business or industry, and other details. Knowing where you've worked before helps hiring managers put everything into context and makes your experience and accomplishments that much more impressive.

Just as with your headline, be strategic. If you've worked only at large public companies and now want to move to a small privately held business, the size of your prior organizations might scare off your target employers. Think about your goals and add the details that make you a good fit for the jobs you want.

3. EMPHASIZE ACHIEVEMENTS

This is perhaps the most critical strategy in creating a powerful and memorable resume. Without highlighting your achievements, your resume will sound much like that of any other HR professional who has similar experience.

While your knowledge and expertise are important, hiring managers want to know more. They seek to understand what you have done—how you have contributed to business objectives, how you have made a difference, what measurable results you have produced, what you have done to improve company culture and more.

Both quantified and unquantified results can add value, so don't feel you must have a hard number for every bullet point. But dig deep to find results wherever possible. Ask yourself about the problem you solved—not just the activity or task, but why it was important to the business.

4. HIGHLIGHT HR KEYWORDS

You know how important keywords are for both human readers and the electronic eyes scanning your resume, so make sure to scatter them throughout the document. You can create a "Core Competencies" or "Professional Skills Summary" section at the top, but that's not

enough. Consider adding bold keywords at the start of each bullet point. This is a very effective strategy both for increasing the keyword density of your resume and for making your resume highly "skimmable."

5. PREPARE YOUR RESUME FOR ATS

As an HR professional, you have the advantage of being able to "look under the hood" of an applicant tracking system (ATS) to see what happens in a typical keyword-driven resume review. Use that knowledge to your benefit.

Because there are so many ATSs, and because candidate searches are conducted by humans who have their own habits and preferences, you can't guarantee a perfect result from every ATS scan. But you can and should follow best practices for formatting your resume, integrating keywords and increasing keyword density.

For example, use and spell out acronyms so that the ATS has the best chance of picking up relevant terms, however they're defined. You might have "SHRM-SCP" at the top after your name, but that should become "Society for Human Resource Management Senior Certified Professional" under the "Education & Professional Credentials" section.

6. SHARE WHAT MAKES YOU SPECIAL

In addition to your professional experience and educational credentials, share your professional credentials (e.g., SHRM-SCP), professional affiliations (e.g., SHRM, OD Network), board of director appointments, and other leadership posts, presentations and public speaking engagements, media features and quotes, and publications.

We recommend that you focus on professional activities and exclude common civic or community-based affiliations. Resume "real estate"—just one or two pages—is extremely valuable, so you want to be certain that each line of text adds strength to your candidacy.

7. WRITE TIGHT, LEAN AND CLEAN

Clean, clear, concise writing is the hallmark of a good resume. Readers simply don't have the time or inclination to wade through irrelevant experiences, fluffy adjectives, unnecessary details and the other "filler" that weighs down many resumes.

No one writes this way on the first pass. It requires repeated review, careful editing, and a constant focus on strategy and goals to determine what's important to include and what does not support your professional brand and career objectives.

In addition to writing tight, pay attention to formatting. Avoid dense paragraphs (anything longer than three or four lines) and allow ample white space to create an inviting document that rewards readers, whether they come for a quick skim or a more thorough read.

MOVING FORWARD

These guidelines cover just some of the things you can do to create a strong resume. Constantly remind yourself that you're writing to the future—to the positions that you're targeting—and emphasize relevant skills, experiences, achievements, keywords and results. If you do, chances are you will get noticed, interviewed and, we hope, hired.

RESUME SAMPLES

Resume Sample #1 (PDF)

LORETTA DANIELSON, MBA, SPHR, SHRM-SCP

312-555-5555 | lorettadanielson@gmail.com
LinkedIn.com/in/lorettadanielson

HUMAN RESOURCES DIRECTOR

Start-ups | Acquisitions | Turnarounds | High-Growth Organizations

Positioning HR as a Business Partner for Excellence

Strategic and innovative HR Executive who translates business vision into HR initiatives that improve performance, profitability, growth, and employee engagement. Empowering leader who supports companies and top executives with a unique perspective and appreciation that human capital is every organization's greatest asset. Genuine influencer who thrives on tough challenges and translates visions and strategies into actionable, value-added goals.

Signature HR Qualifications

Table with 3 columns: HR Best Practices (Employee Relations & Diversity, Talent Acquisition, Staff Coaching & Mentoring), Organizational Development (Employee Performance Improvement, Leadership Development, HR Policy, Process & Systems Design), Change Management (Workforce Planning & Development, M&A Strategies & Due Diligence, Organization-Wide Consensus Building)

Disciplined and flexible problem-solving approach that balances business goals with employee needs.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

DONOVAN CORPORATION | Chicago, IL | \$200M communications & technology services provider 2008 – Present
Director – US & International Human Resources

Recruited to direct HR for US and newly launched international operations. Partner with other directors and senior executives to develop new business initiatives, foster employee engagement, and mobilize talent. Manage \$135K budget.

- HR Organization Leadership: Most senior HR executive in Donovan, directing 4 HR professionals in staffing, recruitment, benefits, executive compensation, training, leadership development, succession planning, HRIS, and regulatory compliance. Heavy emphasis on leading Donovan through rapid HR change and transformation programs.
International HR Launch: Created HR organization – recruitment, staffing, onboarding, training – for both expatriates and local national hires in Brazil, Mexico, and Spain.
Organization Transformation: Enabled operational change essential to a \$5M reduction in HR costs. Helped to facilitate redesign of core business operations, including 2 site closures and 1 fast-track expansion.
Post-Acquisition HR Integration: Streamlined integration of VueX Wireless Systems, Donovan's largest-ever acquisition at the time. Ensured strategic alignment of HR with new business objectives and minimized business interruptions through execution of workforce integration plans.
M&A Due Diligence: Contributed to senior-level M&A decisions, supporting initial analysis through due diligence and subsequent integration. Enabled business growth by assessing HR cultural compatibility and talent impacts.

UNDERWRITERS LABORATORIES | Indianapolis, IN | Privately owned product testing & certification laboratory 2005 – 2007
Director – Human Resources

Transformed HR into a true strategic business partner in the aftermath of an end-to-end HR restructuring. Championed HR vision while forging sustainable HR infrastructure, systems, processes, and practices. Oversaw budget and a staff of 2.

- HRIS Technology: Drove transition from outdated HR systems into a fully integrated HRIS platform from Oracle. Instantly improved analysis, reporting, and planning capabilities while streamlining daily HR functions.
Employee Relations: Introduced proactive employee relations and communications programs to resolve previous labor and management issues and restore the credibility and employee-centric focus of the HR organization.
Career Coaching: Rolled out the company's first HR shared services center for delivery of internal coaching services.
Workforce Expansion: Ramped up California-based engineering group of 50 new employees in just 3 months,

Leslie S. Grant

Philadelphia, PA 19115 — 215-555-5555 — leslie.s.grant@ymail.com — [LinkedIn.com/in/lesliesgrant04](https://www.linkedin.com/in/lesliesgrant04)

HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGER

- ▶ **Complete Generalist HR Affairs** for both turnaround and high-growth manufacturing and production organizations.
- ▶ **Learning & Development**, launching programs to build high-performance workforce and develop future leaders.
- ▶ **Change Management** for HR initiatives, organizational development, HRIS technology, and corporate transformations.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

DOWLING MANUFACTURING GROUP, Philadelphia, PA—2013–Present

Human Resources Director—Full HR generalist management for \$35M consumer products manufacturer with 80 employees.

Transitioned HR from traditional labor relations function into comprehensive HR organization focused on best-in-class HR policies, HRIS technology, staff and management training, and support of strategic business goals. 1 direct report.

- ▶ Provided HR leadership during a period of rapid growth with better than 18% increase in annual revenues and 10% gain in profitability. Currently supporting initial efforts to establish secondary manufacturing facility to meet customer needs.
- ▶ Captured \$50K in benefit cost reductions and avoided an additional \$800K in retirement plan funding.
- ▶ Introduced metrics-based performance management system with a heavy emphasis on operating results. Spearheaded value-add employee recognition and awards programs.
- ▶ Re-invented and implemented new recruitment, staffing, and workforce development programs to meet advancements in product operations, technology, and management.
- ▶ Championed successful EH&S program design/implementation and company-wide employee communications initiative.

TURBO INDUSTRIES, INC., Lancaster, PA—2008–2013

Human Resources Assistant Manager—Consumer Products (2011–2013)—HR generalist—recruitment, staffing, training, compensation, benefits, employee relations—for \$50M division with 120 employees.

Worked in partnership with HR Manager and HR Director to create, implement, and manage improved HR strategies, services, and programs to support the workforce during a downward trend and large-scale turnaround effort.

- ▶ Initiated successful workforce planning, job realignment, employee involvement, and team-building projects.
- ▶ Realigned compensation programs and salary administration to control accelerating costs.
- ▶ Taught Zenger Miller Frontline Leadership and Crosby Quality programs.
- ▶ Appointed to HR team handling plant divestiture and re-employment of all 120 employees with new joint venture partner.

Senior Human Resources Associate (2010–2011)

Managed labor relations, skills and technology training programs, and pay-for-performance initiatives.

Human Resources Associate (2008–2010)

Involved with recruitment, benefits administration, and implementation of company's first HRIS technology.

EDUCATION

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY—**BS Business Management** (2008)
WHARTON SCHOOL OF BUSINESS—**Strategic Human Resources Management**

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Wendy Enelow and Louise Kursmark are both master resume writers, job and career transition coaches, and certified professional resume writers who have authored 40-plus books, including Modernize Your Resume: Get Noticed ... Get Hired (Emerald Career Publishing, 2016).

ABOUT SHRM

The Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) is the world's largest HR membership organization devoted to human resource management. Representing more than 285,000 members in over 165 countries, SHRM provides comprehensive information, education and networking opportunities that help HR professionals resolve daily challenges, strategize and advance their careers. To see what SHRM has to offer, visit shrm.org.

17-1232