

Optional Resume Sections: Deciding When (And Which) to Include

Writing a resume can be complicated if you're not sure how to convey the message that you're the right person for the job. A good way to get this accomplished, however, is by choosing the right sections to include in your resume.

Choosing the standard sections (contact information, objective, work experience/skills, and education) is typically a breeze. But optional sections like career highlights, interests/hobbies, professional/community involvement, awards, and technical skills can be more of a challenge to decide between. So to help you get on the right track, let's look at some ideas for choosing your sections.

Consider the Position for Which You're Applying

When thinking about what sections to include in your resume, it is a good idea to first look closely at the position you're applying for. Why? Because this can help you determine which sections will help you provide the most thorough information regarding your skill set.

For example, if you're applying for a position that requires several years of professional experience in Corporate Communications, and also a strong writing background, there are a couple of ways you can take advantage of resume sections. Of course, you can use your standard Work/Professional Experience section to showcase the jobs you've worked in the field. Then if you have standout writing accomplishments, you can include a separate section (ex. Writing and Distribution) strictly for your writing accolades.

Likewise, if you are interested in furthering your career as a software developer, you could include a "Certificates and Training" section strictly for showcasing all of your Microsoft, Apple, and other certifications. This way you can highlight your standout skills and paint an accurate portrait of your potential abilities.

Think About the Message You Want to Convey

When thinking of optional sections to include, it is also a good idea to consider what message you want to offer the employer about the type of person you are. This is especially true if you know that getting hired for a position might rely partially on your personal interests.

For example, you may want to apply for a manager position with Girl Scouts of America and have extensive professional experience as a manager, though not with a non-profit organization. However, in your spare time, you've sat on the boards of multiple non-profits in your community. This would be a great opportunity to include a "Professional/Community Involvement" section that could showcase your understanding of non-profit organizations coupled with your strong professional background as a manager.

If You're Thinking of Using a Template ...

If you are brand new to writing resumes, or simply want some help creating a new design, a template can provide a good starting point. However, it is smart to avoid following the template to a tee. You would be doing yourself a disservice by not critically thinking about each section in reference to each job you're applying for. This can result in your resume looking carbon copied – and ultimately ending up at the bottom of the stack.

By exploring what the company is looking for, and deciding what message you want to convey, you can have great success in choosing optional sections for your resume. So take your time and think out your purpose. You will find that doing so can help you create your perfect resume.

About the Author

Heather Eagar is a former professional resume writer and is passionate about providing working professionals with current, reliable and effective job search tools and information. [Compare resume writing services](#) to find the best one for you at <http://www.resumelines.com>

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