

Direct Hire Associates

How to Read a Resume

The first step in your hiring process

As recruiters, we know that some of the worst resumes imaginable are, ironically, authored by some very good candidates; and conversely, some of the most beautifully crafted resumes have led to some tragically unforgettable interviews. The lesson we've learned: a resume is just a piece of paper.

If you are looking for the right person to join your staff, approach each resume with an eye for what is possible and be willing to make a longer short list. More importantly, try to see each submission as a person worthy of your respect and your time. Strive to give each resume more than the obligatory 5 to 8 second glance. You should start with as many candidates as you can who are at least technically qualified on paper and then make contact with them. You never know who you'll end up screening into your process – some conversations with average looking resumes will surprise you.

Developing a productive process

Obviously, each resume is a unique person. There is no 1-2-3 process for filtering resumes. However, we can suggest a few tips to help start your candidate filtering process the right way:

The basics:

- Look for resumes that are organized, logical, consistently formatted, and contain no typos.
- Keep an open mind and look for your minimum technical qualifications. You may find your next superstar has slightly less or more than your ideal experience range. You will not know until you talk with them, so give them the benefit of the doubt early on in the process.
- Recognize patterns of behavior and logical career progression. Short-term jobs are ok as long as it's not a pattern, be open to hearing why a candidate may have a short-term position on their resume.

Beyond the basics:

- Set your resume expectations lower. It sounds counter-productive, but it will help you avoid an "eliminating mindset." You should use a less judgmental filter that seeks to screen people into and not out of the next stage of the process.
- Provide a prompt response to applicants, ideally within 48 hours of their resume submission. If you allow more than 2 business days to go by without replying, the candidate will most likely have a lower level of interest than when they first submitted their resume. Your ability to respond in a timely fashion to resume submissions shows you care and will set you apart from your competition. The majority of resumes submitted today are either never responded to or receive cursory and/or automated responses. Trust us! A timely personal response will improve your company's reputation in the local employment market, which will ultimately help you attract better talent in the long term.

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