

Direct Hire Associates

How to Read a Resume

The first step in the hiring process

Ironically, we know that some of the worst resumes we see are authored by some of the best candidates. Conversely, some of the most beautiful resumes have led to some of the most notorious interviews. The lesson we've learned: a resume is just a piece of paper.

As you seek the right person to join your staff, it is wise to 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 resume as a person worthy of your respect and 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 technically qualified on paper, then make contact with them quickly. Candidates who submit a resume expect to hear back, and it will hurt your corporate image if you don't respond. You have never hired someone sight unseen from just a resume, so don't try to screen them out based solely on a piece of paper.

Developing a productive process

Each resume is a unique person and there is no "1-2-3 process" for filtering them. However, we suggest a few tips to help start your process the right way:

The basics:

- Look for resumes that are organized, logical, properly 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 fine as long as it's not a pattern. Be open to hearing why a candidate may have had a short-term position.

Beyond the basics:

- Set your resume expectations lower. It sounds counter-intuitive, but it will help you avoid an "eliminating mindset." A less judgmental filter helps screen people into and not out of the process.
- It is ideal to provide a prompt response to applicants within 48 hours of their resume submission. If you allow more time than this go by without replying, the candidate will develop a lower level of interest and respect for your company. Your ability to respond in a timely fashion to resume submissions shows that you care and will set you apart from your competition.

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