

YOUR POST-COVID RÉSUMÉ

Hiring experts' latest advice for getting to the top of the pile

BY SHARON WATERS

LOOKING FOR A NEW JOB, OR HOPING to return to the paid workforce? With the job market rebounding after last year's record unemployment, this summer is a good time to revamp your résumé.

For all the hours you spend preparing your ré-

sumé, however, it will have far less than a minute to make a good impression. Large employers are increasingly turning to computers to give an initial thumbs-up or thumbs-down, and the first human to screen it will probably spend five to 20 seconds looking at it, says Megan Violette, a recruiter at the job-posting site Indeed. So the résumé should be fo-

No need to label these with "cell" or "email." "We all know what those are," says Courtney Warnsman, a trustee with the National Career Development Association. Skip your mailing address. If searching in a specific area, you can include that town and state.

Use your name or some variation, not a nickname. A Gmail account looks more current than one from AOL or Yahoo. Or you could set up a custom address, along the lines of jane@janedoe.com.

Don't use a headshot. "Save that for LinkedIn," Violette says.

Parentheses around the area code look outdated.

JOHN DOE

john.marvin.doe@gmail.com

linkedin.com/in/johndoe

321-555-5555

Highlight, briefly, your professional identity and top attributes. "You get to define who you are," says Andrew Seaman, a senior editor at LinkedIn News. Don't refer to yourself in the third person.

Professional Summary

I am an award-winning circus professional—an expert in circus performance, personnel management and marketing. Despite a shrinking U.S. market, I have consistently increased attendance and revenues through data-driven social media marketing and promotion of my

List up to 15 skills relevant to your industry and job. Delete ones that are universally expected, like Microsoft Word and Outlook.

Skills

- Juggling
- Tightrope Walking
- Oversized Shoe Repair
- Clowning
- Acrobatics
- Crying on the Inside
- Elephant Hygiene

By labeling this section "Experience" instead of "Work Experience," you can list volunteer work as its own entry, especially if you have a career gap.

Temp opportunities can bridge an employment gap. If you are doing higher-level work, list your title as consultant.

Experience

XYZ Staffing Agency, New York, NY 2020–present

Consultant

- Fostered 15 newly retired elephants at a wildlife preserve after their owner ceased operations
- Developed lifesaving treatment protocol for juvenile elephant with peanut allergy
- Launched Instagram account for elephants that gained 110,000 followers and raised \$1.5 million

Include dates. Deleting them in the hopes of disguising your age can raise red flags with recruiters. Also, dates help a recruiter see if you were at a company during an important time or when a mutual connection was there.

PQR Brothers Circus, Toledo, OH 2009–2020

Chief Clown & Assistant Lion Tamer

- Won \$100,000 grand prize, *America's Got Clowns*, 2017
- Drove, on a regular basis, minivan carrying 51 clowns and 3 poodles
- Achieved 87% success rate in recapturing escaped lions

Start bullet points with action verbs. Focus on unique successes. List quantifiable accomplishments, such as how much money you saved your employer. Every word counts, so avoid the obvious.

MNO Neo-Retro Circus, Portland, OR 2006–2009

Your Money

- Juggled up to 5 chain saws blindfolded while seated on chair balanced on tightrope
- Spun cotton candy at the rate of 1 bushel per minute
- Led 5-person elephant-waste disposal crew

This section is optional. Make a concise list of jobs you held more than 15 years ago, with minimal details. A recruiter can always ask for more info if interested.

Career Summary

Cirque JKL, Paris, France *Sous-clown*, 2001–2006
GHI Sideshow Industries, Denver, CO *Carnival barker, animal handler*, 1995–2001

Continuing Education/Certifications

First Aid for Circus Animals (Coursera); First Aid for Clowns Working With Circus Animals (LinkedIn); Master Juggler (International Balance Association); Advanced Topics in Elephant Communication (edX)

Education

DEF University Master of Business Administration
ABC College Bachelor of Arts in Theology, Cum Laude

Volunteer Activities

Circus Cheer for Children's Hospitals; ElderClown Entertainment Coalition

Stick to one or two pages, max. "It doesn't dilute all your experience," says Katie Birkelo, senior vice president at the staffing firm Randstad US. "It keeps it more relevant."

It's OK to leave dates off for academic achievements. But if you completed a degree, make that clear.

Show that you've updated your skills, kept current with your field and obtained or renewed professional certifications. "Subject matter expertise is the antidote to ageism," Cohen says.

Use an 11- or 12-point simple font like Arial, Calibri or Verdana. Avoid serif fonts like Times New Roman.

Listing hobbies and other activities is increasingly acceptable, Seaman says. "It shows that you're active and outgoing."

Include keywords from the job listing so your résumé makes it past screenings by computerized applicant-tracking systems. Look for additional buzzwords on the company's website, in press releases and in advertisements. "What they're advertising to customers is what they want to hire," says Phyllis Hartman, a Pittsburgh-area career coach.

cused, succinct, simple and easy to read. "Really be in tune with the job posting," Violette says.

It's important not only to craft a good résumé but also to get that résumé into the hands of the right person. Bigger companies rely a lot on referrals, so finding an ally inside the organization is almost crucial, says Carol Fishman Cohen, CEO

of iRelaunch, a company focused on people returning to the workplace. "Above and beyond the time that you spend on your résumé," she says, "you're going to want to spend more time working on who you're connected with." ■

Sharon Waters, a former CPA, has written for Wired.com and other publications.

Let's Get Visual

Visual résumés, with heavy use of graphics and charts, are a recent trend that can differentiate you from the pack. Here are five tips on why, when and how to use one.

► **Show your stuff.** Visual résumés have gained some traction as we emerge from the pandemic because there's been so little face-to-face contact. "Creatively speaking, people want to put their image out there, because they've been unable to," says Birkelo of Randstad US.

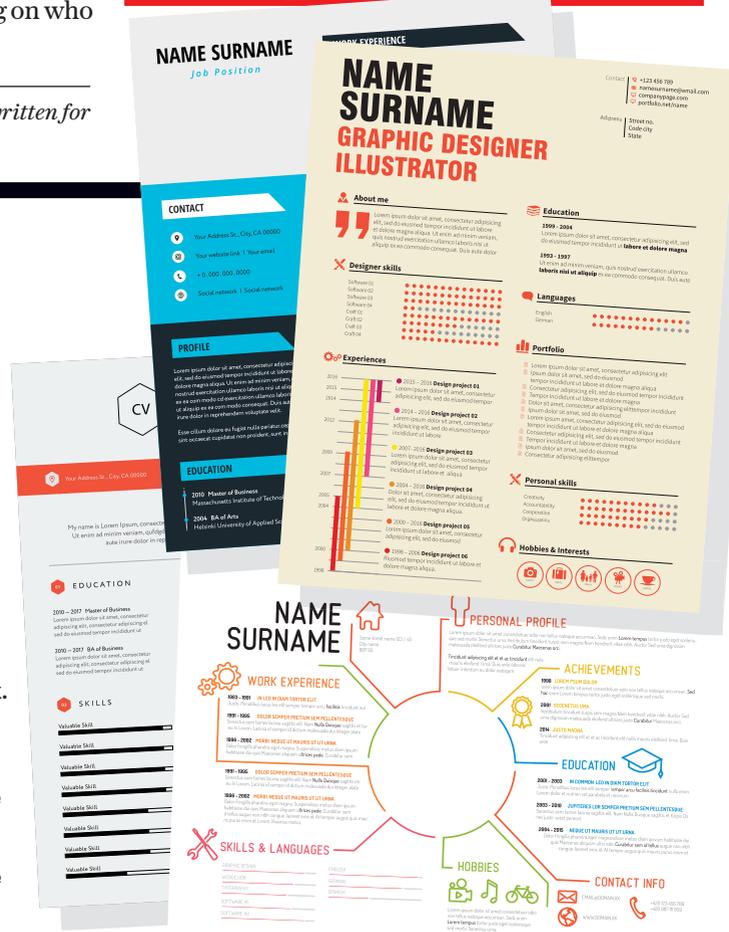
► **Know your audience.** These stylish résumés are best for creative jobs

in graphic design, web design and marketing because the document demonstrates your abilities. "Show them what you can do, as well as tell them what you can do," says Warnsman of the National Career Development Association.

► **Use in person.** If you are seeking a job in other fields, you might use a visual résumé as a second version—for networking or at an interview you've secured. Don't submit electronically because infographics could get corrupted. "You don't want it to look funky on the other side," says LinkedIn's Seaman.

► **Don't overdo it.** If there is too much going on, it can be distracting for the recruiter. Avoid exotic fonts and ink colors that may be hard to read. "It's still a job application," says Dafne Ciraco, talent specialist at Stiles, a Florida commercial real estate firm.

► **Enlist help.** If doing your own visual résumé, have a friend review it to make sure it hits the mark. "They're very difficult to pull off," Seaman says. Need an expert? Search for résumé writers online or find a consultant on LinkedIn ProFinder, a marketplace of freelance service providers.



TOP: JEFF ELKINS; BOTTOM: SHUTTERSTOCK (4)