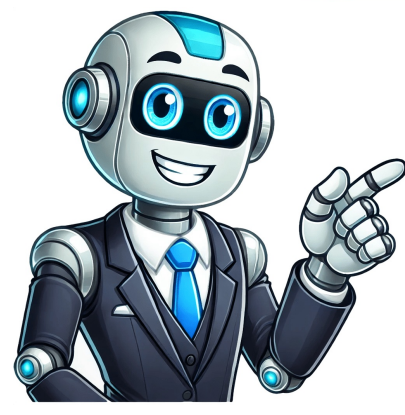I'm not a bot

Headline for a resume

What makes you click an article when you're scrolling on your phone? If you think about it, it's usually the headline. Out of the hundreds of stories we scan in a day, we're most likely to click and read something when the headline feels urgent, relevant, or clever. Trending SearchesSEARCH ALL JOBS The same principles apply when it comes to your resume: A strong headline will draw recruiters into the story of you—and entice them to keep reading. As a certified professional resume writer who has written hundreds (and I mean hundreds) of resumes, I strongly recommend using a headline. Whether you're fresh out of college and looking for your first "real" job, or you're 20+ years into your career and eyeing the C-suite, a brilliant headline can make all the difference in landing a job interview. Here's everything you need to know about what resume headlines are, why they work, and how to add one to the resume you'll use to land your next job. A resume headline is a concise description of your work experience, placed right at the top of your resume. It goes below your name and contact information, and above your summary or opening resume section. Your resume headline usually pairs a job title with a brief phrase or two that relates to the job you're pursuing. It's where you tell a decision maker—who is most likely skimming dozens of applications at a time—that you're a great fit for the job. Resume headlines work because they allow you to frame who you are and your core value proposition to the recruiter or hiring manager right away. This is your chance to say that you're exactly what they're looking for and prompt them to keep reading. A headline also gives you a better shot at getting noticed because you can weave relevant keywords into this part of your resume. Keywords (job titles, skills, educational credentials, etc.) that align with the job description can increase the odds of your resume passing through an applicant tracking system (ATS) and landing in front of human reviewers who will ultimately make the hiring decisions. So, what does a resume headline look like? Here are three different templates you can use to write your own. When writing resumes for my clients, I typically use this formula: 1-3 Commonly Used Job Titles That Describe You (In Plain English) Keyword-Rich Supporting Statement Showcasing Something That Makes You a Standout for That Role You might also consider a single-line headline that combines your title with an attention-grabbing phrase, something like this: Job Title with X Years' Experience Doing This Directly Relevant Thing Job Title Who Achieved This Very Impressive Result Certainly, you could go with one to three titles without the descriptive subhead or phrase. This is sometimes called a resume title, and it's better than having no headline at all. But I'd argue it's a missed opportunity to share something specific that ties your capabilities to the requirements of a job. Whether you choose to use a resume title in your headline or keep it to just one line is really a matter of personal preference. What's important is that you have one in the first place—and use it to your advantage. A compelling headline will be both keyword-rich and provide a short and snappy elevator pitch—something that summarizes what you're all about in relation to the job or jobs you're pursuing. Here's what I recommend: Again, your goal is to set the stage with recruiters and hiring managers that you're exactly what they're looking for. Given this, the more closely you can align your resume to the job or jobs you want next—without making stuff up, of course—the better. For instance, if you're a marketing manager who's built a successful e-commerce platform for your current employer and you're applying for jobs at companies looking for a marketing leader with e-commerce experience, you'd be wise to announce that you're a marketing leader with that specific experience in your headline. Building on tip number one, keep in mind that your resume headline is not a tattoo. You can, and should, modify your headline as needed if you're applying for jobs with varying requirements. So if you're that same marketing manager and you're applying for another job that emphasizes social media marketing—and you also have experience doing that—you shouldn't hesitate to swap out the e-commerce mention for something more specific to social media. Brevity and strategy are key with your headline. If you're using a job title and a phrase on the next line—like my team typically does—your whole headline should take up two lines max. Otherwise, your headline should be a succinct one-liner combining title(s) with a powerful phrase about your fitness for this job. Don't waste valuable real estate with vague terms like "results oriented" or clichés such as "thinks outside the box." Recruiters see these lines so often that their eyes will likely skip over 'em, and that's the opposite of your goal here. Instead, show your impact with a data point: X Job Title Who Increased Revenue by 150%, or similar. If you're looking for a job as a chief of staff and are basically working as one now, but have an oddball title that doesn't immediately or clearly convey what you do, introduce yourself as a chief of staff in your headline. It all comes back to the keywords both the ATS and the people reading your resume are looking for. You don't want to miss the chance to be considered for a full-stack engineering role because your current company uses the title "full-stack magician," or be overlooked for a customer support role because your last company insisted on the title "weekend happiness concierge" (btw, those are real examples). Again, if you're a top performer with impressive, quantifiable results to share, this is a great opportunity for you to show off. Take a look at the examples below to see what this could look like in action. What does a resume headline actually look like? Let's run through a few examples. Say you're a project and program manager who just earned your Project Management Professional (PMP) certification. You've selected a few project and program management jobs that you want to apply for and notice that this certification is consistently listed as a preferred qualification. (Hooray, you have it!) You're also seeing a common theme among the job descriptions that got you excited: They all call for someone who has worked with SaaS (or software as a service) companies. Hooray again, you have. Your headline, then, may look like this: PMP-Certified Project Manager | Senior Program Manager Delivering Complex Projects—On Time & Within Budget—for Global SaaS Providers This keyword-rich title immediately tells the reviewer that you're a project manager and a program manager and that you have the valuable PMP certification. The rest of the headline makes it clear that you have experience in a SaaS environment and know how to successfully deliver projects on deadline and within budget. You'll also notice that every word in the headline and subhead earns its spot on the page. There is no fluff. There are no clichés. Everything works together to bring the reader into your story and make them eager to continue into your summary section. Next up, how about a mechanical engineering graduate who is looking for engineering jobs in the robotics industry? This time, we'll go with a headline that combines title and power phrase in a single line: Purdue University BSME Honors Graduate With Robot Programming Experience This one capitalizes on the prestige of a Purdue University engineering degree and showcases the candidate's experience with a specific requirement of many robotics engineering jobs: the ability to program a robot. Here are a few more headline examples, for a variety of industries and roles: Nonprofit Leader | Executive Director | Director of Development Driving Transformative Performance on Behalf of Global Humanitarian Agencies Supply Chain Manager | Logistics Team Lead Optimizing Operational Performance in Global Manufacturing Environments Executive Assistant | Office Manager Enabling Business Leaders to Thrive by Delivering World-Class Administrative Support Technical Writer | Trainer & Instructor Transforming Complex Technical Information Into Compelling and Actionable Content, Lessons, & Documentation We could take those same four people and create one-line headlines for them: Nonprofit Director Who Has Successfully Raised $5M for Children's Charities Supply Chain Leader With 15 Years' Experience Managing End-to-End Global Supply Chains Executive Assistant—an Indispensable Partner to Senior Business Leaders Technical Writer Specializing in Transforming Complex Information Into Compelling & Actionable Content If you want even more ideas, consider these: Certified Public Accountant (CPA) With 8 Years Auditing ExperienceSaaS Account Executive Who's Closed Over $10 Million in SalesContent Writer and Editor Who Has Increased SEO Traffic by Over 200%Award Winning UX-Designer Specializing in AccessibilityAccount Manager Responsible for Upsells Totalling $500K+ in 6 MonthsBack-End Developer Fluent in JavaScript, SQL, Ruby, and PythonAdvertising Executive Responsible for the GEICO GeckoSocial Media Marketing Specialist who Launched and Grew 100K Follower TikTok AccountRecruiter Who's Sourced, Interviewed, and Overseen Hiring Process for 200+ Hired CandidatesVery Good Dog Who Doesn't Bark at UPS GuyComp Sci Grad with Past Internships at Google and FacebookProject Manager Specializing in Completing Over-Budget Initiatives CheapHR Professional with 18 Years in Benefits ManagementCertified Special Education Teacher With 5 Years Experience in Multi-Grade ClassroomData Analyst With 4 Years Experience in Financial ModelingData Scientist Specializing in Machine LearningIT Professional Who Set Up Hillary Clinton's Server—Which Is Still UnhackedEngineer Who Actually Founded Tesla Bottom line: No one—not even the ATS—can see and feel and touch your years of experience and understand why you should be hired. It's on you to frame the "you on paper" as the very best candidate to the decision makers, whether they're a technology or a group of humans. And it all starts with your headline. Regina Borsellino also contributed writing, reporting, and/or advice to this article. Updated on 30 December 2024If we were to compare your resume to an online article, your name would be the author and the resume headline would be...You guessed it: the article headline. It's what makes the reader click on the article in the first place because they want to know more about the issue. If you want to make recruiters "click" on your resume, a concise and impactful resume headline is what you should aim for. In this article, we'll discuss how to achieve just that!What's a resume headline & why it's importantHow to write an effective resume headline31+ resume headline examples to take inspiration fromArticle comparisons aside, a resume headline is a catchy one-liner that highlights your experience and skills, briefly introducing you to the recruiter. Why is it so important?Well, typically recruiters skim over each resume for a brief 7 seconds only and then decide if it's going to the "rejection" or "maybe" pile of resumes. Your goal is to not only make it to the "maybe" pile but also to convince the recruiter you're a top candidate. Your resume headline basically dishes your skills out and shows the recruiter you're relevant for the position right away.If it's written the right way, it will encourage them to read further. That said, there's also another awesome advantage of using a resume header:It will help get your resume past an Applicant Tracking System.An Applicant Tracking System, or ATS in short, is the recruiters' best friend. It's a type of software that scans the resumes of all applicants and sends the recruiter only the "matches". About 75% of applicants are rejected through this process alone! So, how does the software work? Well, ATS scans your resume, looking for relevant keywords and experiences. If it doesn't find them, the resume is automatically rejected.Having a good resume headline, though, helps prevent this, as the software can immediately see your professional title and identify that you're relevant for the job.There's a lot more to passing Applicant Tracking Systems than just a good resume headline. To learn more, check out our (free) resources:Before we teach you how to write a compelling resume headline, here's a quick memo:A resume headline is not the same thing as a resume title.Both of them need to be carefully written and targeted to the job position, but they have their differences. While a resume title simply states your professional title, a resume headline also mentions your skills and years of experience. To make things clearer, let's say you're an HR specialist applying for an HR manager's position. Your title would be:Human Resources SpecialistWhereas, your resume headline would be:HR specialist with 4+ years of experience in helping medium to large corporations hire IT professionals.The fact that it's so short makes writing a resume headline both easy and hard. You only have to sit down and write a few words, BUT those few words have to be well-thought and spot-on. Although there's no set rule on how a headline should look, the structure below has become pretty standard:Job Title + Years of Experience + Skill/Specific Task/Impressive AchievementGet that right and you're already halfway towards a perfect resume headline!For that other 50%, keep in mind the following tips:Keep it short. The point of the header itself is to give a concise statement that can be read in a matter of seconds. If it's longer than a catchy one sentence, it turns into a resume objective or resume summary.Place it right. Your resume headline should be the first thing to come right after your name and surname. It is an introduction to everything else on your resume, after all.Use title case and a slightly larger font than the rest of the text. Your resume headline should stand out. Make sure it's not too exaggerated or flashy, though.Use action verbs and power words instead of overused terms like "motivated" or "team-player". Stick to concrete skills that you can support with your experiences.Present over future. This is not the place to talk about your career goals, so focus on what you currently do and what you have achieved so far.1-2 skills max. You should leave the rest for the skills section and only mention your top skill/s that also match what the job you're applying for requires.If you're a recent graduate with no work experience, focus on your top skills and proficiencies, as well as any impressive extracurricular experience.On the same note, if you only have around 1 or 2 years of experience, we'd recommend focusing more on your achievements and skills instead of experiences.New job, new headline. Since it's the first thing the recruiter reads on your resume, make sure it's targeted to the position you are applying for.Write many and pick one. For each application, write down a few versions of your headline, check how they look and sound, and pick the one that seems like the best way to describe yourself.Still not sure how to write an effective resume headline?Don't worry - we've got your back!Get inspired from the resume headline examples below!Supply chain manager with 6+ years of experience in steering large-scale manufacturing environments.Engineer specialized in machine learning and data mining.History graduate with internship experience as art curator.Marketing executive that has helped generate $500k+ in revenue.Office assistant with years of experience in fast-paced work environments.Multilingual sales associate with 2+ years of experience in retail.Seasoned copywriter and google ads specialist.Experienced marketing director and mba candidate.E-commerce senior developer with 6+ years of experience in creating, managing, and maintaining databases.Experienced restaurant manager in overseeing operations of highly-frequented restaurants with a staff of 20+ people.Legal professional with 3+ years of experience in paralegal work.Business student and founder of x university's sustainability club.Pharmacist with 12+ years in the pharmaceutical service industry.Videographer and winner of Netflix short documentary competition fund.Recent engineering graduate with work experience as teaching assistant.Computer scientist with professional experience in cybersecurity.Seasoned chef with experience in two Michelin star restaurants.Dynamic barista with 4+ years of experience in customer service.Financial planner with deep understanding and experience in investment banking practices.Senior accountant providing cost reduction strategies for a diverse range of clientele.Data analyst with 4+ years of experience in the marketing analytics field.Business development manager with experience in managing projects with an annual budget of over $2-3.Experienced cashier providing efficient and accurate service in the food industry.Biology high school teacher with 10+ years of experience in teaching.Graphic designer with experience in designing over 30 different websites from start to finish.Project manager with a background in computer science and focus on software projects.Financial consultant with experience in mentoring and helping startups raise funding.Sales associate with a long track record of hitting & exceeding KPIs.Store manager experienced in supervising teams of 10+ associates.Library science graduate with internship experience as book acquisitor and organizer.Content writer with 5+ years of experience in creating high-quality SEO content.Honors graduate with experience in website development using java and python.And that's about it on resume headlines!Once you've created several variations of your resume headline, you'll discover that it's actually pretty easy!Before you start working on your headline, though, let's go over the main points we covered in this article:A resume headline is a concise introduction to your work experience, skills, and professional background.Having a good headline will encourage recruiters to look deeply into your resume.A resume headline can also allow you to bypass applicant tracking systems & ensure that your CV gets read by a recruiter.When writing your headline use the following structure: Job Title + Work Experience + Skill/Achievement.Now it's time to get creative and write down some headlines!