

## Resumes: One Page or Two?

***Q. I am applying for a coveted in-house position. Having practiced for over seven years in the same firm, I have not needed a resume in a long time. When I was in law school, career services admonished never to exceed one page. Does the one-page limit still apply?***

A. Excellent question! This question comes up at least once a week. In the past, a resume was essentially a simple outline, listing degrees, employment, and basic biographical data. Bullet points were thought to be unprofessional – resembling ad copy.

In today's digital world, applicants are often competing against dozens, if not hundreds, of other candidates, who submit their resumes online. The only way to distinguish yourself is to include relevant, professional accomplishments. When detailed successes are crammed onto a single-spaced page in eight-point font, not only is it unattractive -- it is virtually illegible.

What fascinates me is that human resource professionals continue to express a preference for one-page resumes, but the decision makers often appear to favor a longer, more informative version. Recently, a client called in a panic. She had just submitted her two-page resume to a firm in application for an advertised position. In a conversation with the HR Director, she was told that one-page resumes were preferred. Fortunately, I was able to reassure her that another client had joined the same firm a few months prior. His resume was three pages long and included informative descriptions of his past successes.

In creating a resume that gets you an interview, you will want to include a "Summary of Qualifications" and a "Professional Experience" section. In setting forth your qualifications and experience, you do not want a bland litany of types of cases and matters handled. You want bullet points that showcase not only your expertise but also your successes. Instead of, "Prepare motions for summary judgment," you might include: "Successfully prepared and argued motion for summary judgment resulting in dismissal of \$2 million harassment claim." If you are responding to an ad be sure that your resume highlights the qualifications listed in the posting.

During the past several years, I have observed that when my clients were competing against a large pool of candidates (300 +), only the attorneys with carefully crafted resumes, including relevant accomplishments received interviews and ultimately landed the jobs. The average length of these winning resumes was two and a half pages.

The experience of my clients is consistent with what other career professionals advise. Recent grads excepted, they generally agree that a longer resume is fine. "If you have enough experience and credentials to really highlight on two

pages, don't shortchange yourself." Grant, Alexis. *The Death of the One-Page Resume?* US News and World Report, 8 Mar 2011.

In conclusion, brevity may pack a punch, but the age-old rule of the one-page resume is not as hard and fast as it once was!

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