

How to Evaluate Resumes

Because resumes present only the positive aspects of a person's background and work experience, they have limited usefulness. In fact, if you are using a recruiting company to conduct the search, resumes may not be forwarded to you unless you specifically request them.

If you are conducting the search on your own, however, you will have to read and evaluate many resumes in order to choose the candidates you want to interview. The task will be less time-consuming and more successful if you follow the system described below.

1. Review the qualifications cited on the master Job Specification Questionnaire. Compare the information on each resume to these qualifications. If you've asked to have samples of the applicant's work sent to you with the resume, review them carefully to see if the quality and nature of the work are appropriate for your organization.
2. Divide resumes into three piles. In the first pile put resumes from individuals who seem to possess all of the qualification for the job. In the second pile, put the "maybes"—resumes that exhibit some, but not all, of the qualifications you seek. Resumes from people who are clearly unsuitable or unqualified go into the third pile.

Sloppily typed resumes and resumes that have many misspelling should go on the unsuitable pile. If the person doesn't care how the resume looks, he or she won't care much about job performance, either.

Resumes that show suitable experience and qualifications, but no dates of employment go on the "maybe" pile. Such functional resumes are often used by people who are trying to mask long periods of unemployment—or their tendency to job hop.

Be wary of resumes with lengthy sections describing personal accomplishments and interest that are unrelated to your needs. Applicants who include irrelevant details in their resumes may have few qualifications to talk about.

3. Reread all the resumes in the suitable pile. For supervisory, managerial, or executive positions you will want to single out those that show profit-mindedness, specific accomplishments, career progression, and willingness to work hard.

For instance: you would want to choose a resume that stated "developed marketing strategies that increased sales 10% in a six-month period" rather than one that said the individual was "responsible for developing marketing strategies." Similarly, the statement, "pinpointed cause of off-odor in food substance and developed method to prevent it from recurring" tells more about the person's abilities than "knowledge of methods development."

For lower-level positions look for evidence that the person is willing to work hard and prides himself or herself on accuracy and dependability.