

## Who Needs an Objective Statement?

Question: What should I write in my objective or summary at the top of the resume?

Answer: I object to an objective statement.

Most of the time you simply don't need one. If you are applying for a specific job at a specific company, what is your objective? Obviously, it's to get that job. Yet time and time again, I see long, flowery objective statements like:

Hard working strategic thinker looking to use my exceptional communication, leadership, and creative problem-solving skills in a growing and dynamic organization.

On the surface, that may sound good, but let's really think about what's written. That statement is full of what I call "self-ascribed attributes."

Nothing Objective about It

According to you, you are a hard worker, a strategic thinker, and a great communicator. In truth, anyone can write that on a resume. There is no test you take to prove that you are a hard worker.

As a result, these personal manifestos mean absolutely nothing to recruiting directors looking at your resume. They simply don't believe you.

The only time you need an objective statement is when you are applying to a job and you're not sure where to send the resume and you're not sure where they have an opening. In that case, you'd want to write something very simple like:

To obtain a position as a financial analyst at Dick's Sporting Goods.

This way, the recruiting director knows what type of job you're seeking.

The Case for Summaries

A summary statement (also called "professional profile" or "summary of qualifications") is another story. Some folks need them, and some do not.

If you're a student or have been working fewer than four or five years, you don't need one. At the risk of being obvious, there's not much to summarize -- especially since you have a one-page resume.

For those who have been working for a while, a summary statement can work to your benefit, especially if you have great experiences that occurred prior to your last job. In other words, you can highlight the good stuff that is on the second page of your resume.

## Two Ways to Stand Out

Just like with an objective statement, you must avoid the self-ascribed attributes. Make sure you back every statement up with support for your claim.

Bad: Strong leader.

Good: Seasoned manager with experience managing diverse groups of up to 12 associates across two branch locations.

I recommend you list four or five summary points. Here's a little trick when it comes to deciding which ones: Look at the job description for the job you'd like to get. Then do your best to mirror the requirements that they list in that description.

For instance if the job description says, "Must have five years of financial planning experience," then your summary point can say:

Five years of financial planning experience handling more than \$3 million in annual company revenue.

Of course, you can't lie if you don't have the experience. But if you do have the experience, try to make yourself look like the perfect person for the job from the start.