

Does a Resume Need an Objective?

If you learned how to create a resume 10 years ago or longer, you might be surprised to know that an objective is no longer an essential part of a standard resume. In fact, some career experts will tell you that having a resume objective is unnecessary at best and dated at worst. Like the line "references upon request," it's a space-filler that's keeping hiring managers from getting to the meat of your resume.

You have a limited amount of time in which to grab their attention: eight seconds, to be exact, according to one study. Obviously, you don't want to waste any of that time telling them what they already know from the subject line of your email or the requisition number in the applicant tracking system.

Better Alternatives to a Resume Objective

Branding Statements and Profiles

A branding statement or professional profile has taken the place of the objective for most resume writers. In this brief introductory paragraph, job seekers provide an elevator speech – a quick summary of their experience, skills, and attributes that describes their career and qualifications at a glance.

This introduction fulfills two main purposes at the same time: it gives hiring managers quick insight into the candidate, while allowing the candidate an opportunity to use resume keywords that will get their application noticed.

Use Keywords in Your Resume

Choosing the right keywords is essential to get past software and human screeners. These keywords aren't the same as industry buzzwords – those are almost always overused and will get your resume a one-way trip to the circular file. No, resume keywords are individual to the job you're applying for, and should change every time you submit your resume for a new position.

How to Select Keywords

To figure out the best ones to use, scan the job listing, and make a list of the most important words, e.g. job titles like "regional manager" or "data scientist" and skills words like "proficient in Javascript" or "proven seller." Use the words that apply to your experience, skills, and job history, and craft a professional profile or branding statement.

Keep Your Resume Honest

Note: while it's OK to emphasize your most relevant experience, don't lie – especially when it comes to job titles held or skills acquired. It does you no good to get hired for a position if you can't deliver on the promise your resume has made to the hiring manager.

Sample Branding Statements and Profiles

Award-winning graphic designer whose portfolio includes Fortune 100 clients like CVS, Verizon, and Kroger. Proficient in Adobe Illustrator, Photoshop, and InDesign. Adept at estimating costs, gaining consensus across teams, and delivering projects on time and on budget.

- More Examples and Tips for What to Include in a Branding Statement

Sample Resume Profiles

If You Absolutely Must Have an Objective on Your Resume

Can't let go of the idea of including an objective on your resume just yet? Make sure it's the right one.

Resume objectives must:

- Change, depending on the job for which you're applying. It's no good using the same objective for multiple job openings. Resist the temptation to tweak a word or two, and craft your resume objective from scratch for each position under consideration.
- Contain keywords specific to the position, job description, and most valuable skills.
- Provide more than just the job title and description. Don't waste a moment of the hiring manager's time by repeating information they already know, such as which job you're applying for or what the basic duties are.
- Show why you're a well qualified candidate for the position.
- Explain what you have to offer, not what you want in your next job or company.

Bottom line: every part of your resume should count, including the objective, if you feel the need to include one. Remember, you only have eight seconds in which to make a first impression on the hiring manager or recruiter. You can't afford to waste time, especially right at the beginning of your resume. Grab their attention and don't let go.

Credit: <https://www.thebalance.com>