

# GET THE JOB

## How to Impress in Six Seconds

It's commonly understood in hiring circles that managers spend an incredibly short amount of time initially reviewing candidate résumés.

The agreed-upon figure is actually just six seconds. Does your résumé pass that test?

Obviously, some key points matter more than others on such an abbreviated timeline. Here's a look at how to impress in a matter of seconds.

### INSIDE THEIR EVALUATION

Hiring managers and recruiters know just what they're looking for, and often have extensive training in how to quickly spot key words and required qualifications. That comes in handy when an avalanche of applications arrives after a job is posted. In some cases, an open position might draw dozens, or even hundreds, of candidates.

They do a brief scan, paying close attention to what these potential hires have done and what their goals are, then create a stack of the résumés



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they'd like to return to for a deeper look. Unfortunately, some qualified candidates may get passed over along the way, but this kind of swift culling is necessary in order to get a handle on what can be an unwieldy number of initial candidates.

### WHAT TO FOCUS ON

With such a limited amount of time to grab a manager's

attention, potential employees have to make sure the most important professional elements are highlighted. So, make sure your name and contact information is prominently displayed, as well as any relevant degrees, professional designations or certifications, and your job title. Those are important indicators for experience. Previous job titles, start and end dates,

and education details round out the principle areas of focus for your six-second evaluation. This completes a first impression of you in the areas of reliability and level of training.

### AFTER YOUR TIME IS UP

Employers value someone who is responsible and conscientious, and you can portray those values early in the process by following up via

email or phone call after you've applied. Explain your recent application, and describe again the skills and other qualifications that make you a good candidate for the open position. End things with an advance communication of your thanks for being considered. They'll know you are the kind of person who'll follow through, and your message could convince the hiring manager to give your résumé another look.

### THE LONGER VIEW

Depending on the job, a hiring manager or recruiter might possess the time and inclination to spend far longer while initially looking over your résumé. The six-second test isn't grounded in any hard-and-fast rule. Still, the idea that you need to make an immediate impression remains. These first reads aren't typically going to be in depth; instead, potential employers will skim the details in order to remove applicants they feel are unlikely to get the job, then return for a more complete examination of promising résumés later. Sometimes, these very general first impressions are what derails a job candidacy, so focus on the details which matter the most. That's how you go from one pile to the other, and then from prospect to perfect fit.