



How to Create a Consultant Resume **Paradigm Consulting Group Resume Guide**

IIBA Career Fair

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1. Welcome to the Paradigm Resume Guide

The guidance provided in this document will help you build a resume that best describes what you have to offer so you can grab the audience's attention, keep them reading and make them want to hire you!

We are here to help.

2. Summary

This guide has been organized to allow you to quickly find the guidance you need while writing or updating your resume. It is intended for those just starting out, as well as seasoned consultants who need to refine their resume.

When approaching your resume keep the following in mind:

Yourself

- Your resume is all about you... It is your opportunity to outline your accomplishments, to 'sell' yourself.
- Having a strong resume is your first main "deliverable"!
- Use a confident tone and focus on your accomplishments.
- Show how you would be invaluable to the hiring manager.
- Outline the work you did, how you did it and the results of your work.
- Demonstrate how these results impacted the project/company.
- Tailor your resume to a specific company or industry whenever possible.
- Quantify your work, results, projects etc. using numbers and specifics that demonstrate the magnitude of your achievements.
- Focus on the things the customer will be looking for.

The Hiring Manager

- Hiring Managers are busy and will take very little time deciding if you are a fit for their job so you need to impress them quickly and keep them reading!

And most of all

Prove that you are the best candidate over everyone else!

3. How Many Resumes Should I have?

Everyone has an opinion on resumes.

"It should never be more that 3 pages"
"Three pages doesn't adequately tell your story"

Your resume has a variety of purposes; get attention, get you in the door, provide evidence that you have exactly what a Hiring Manager is looking for.

Since every Hiring Manager is different, you need to seriously consider a different resume (or customization of your resume for) for each company you are applying to. Understand what each company is all about, their Mission\Vision\Values drive a corporation and its culture. What other positions are they posting for? Can you understand the type of work they are doing? How will that affect the type of individuals they are looking for.

We recommend that you have at least two resumes:

- A short 2-4 page resume that presents a high level overview of your skillsets and background.
- A longer CV that has many more details that supports your skillset.

4. What Hiring Managers are Looking For

When writing or updating your resume put yourself into the hiring manager's shoes and think about what they will be looking for while reviewing your resume. They have a problem, and they are hiring a person to help them solve their problem. Hiring Managers are very busy and research indicates they will spend an initial **6 seconds** reviewing your resume to decide if you are a good fit for them.

They will make this quick decision by looking at your:

- Name,
- current title and company,
- previous title and company,
- current position, start and end dates,
- previous position, start and end dates and
- education.

In this first few seconds, Hiring Managers are looking for people with:

- knowledge of their industry,
- relevant and extensive experience and
- relevant education

Once your resume has passed this first test, Hiring Managers may then do a more detailed review to see if you will:

- bring real value to their organization,
- fit their company culture,
- be able to apply your experience to the client's projects and
- bring lessons learned from previous project to their projects.

5. Perfecting your resume

5.1 General Guidance

- Make a great first impression - your resume may be the Hiring Manager's first insight into who you are, so take advantage of that and make it count!
- Run your resume through an "English (Canada)" spell-checker!
- Think about the top 3 reasons a Hiring Manager would bring you on and make sure these things show throughout your resume.
- Use a confident tone; be loud and proud of your accomplishments.
- If you have worked for a similar company in the same industry, make this very clear in your resume as this will be weighed heavily.
- You must be able to defend everything in your resume - if you say you improved efficiency by 75%, you need to be able to back it up in an interview, so be honest about your accomplishments.
- Use specifics such as "Achieved a 25% reduction in project related expenses by eliminating the need for outsourced testing resources. This was accomplished through the automation of regression testing scripts." Instead of "Saved the company money".
- Where possible, use numbers to demonstrate results: dollars, sizes, percentages (increases, decreases). If exact numbers are not available, use more generic terms like 'nearly doubled', 'multi-million dollar project' etc.
- Write your resume in the third person. Example: "Jane is a Senior Business Analyst with 5 years of experience..."
- Even if you completed the same tasks on multiple projects, do not use "same as above" on your resume. Instead, summarize the information and focus on your major accomplishments and what you brought to each employer.
- If you find yourself using the same words over and over again on your resume use a thesaurus to find another way of saying the same thing
- Avoid phrases like "extensive experience with...". Give specifics like "12 years of experience developing test strategy documents..."

5.2 Professional Experience Summary

Your resume/CV should have a description of your Professional Experience Summary at the top:

- This section is critical as it is the first thing a customer will look at.
- You need to "grab" the reader right away so they want to look at the rest of your resume.
- Try to keep this section to one to two paragraphs.
- Make sure this section outlines your experience and skills related to the specific job for which you are applying.
- Customers may not even look at your resume if they believe you are either over or under qualified for a job.
- Outline major accomplishments that this Hiring Manager would care about.
- Mention methodologies or standards you employ
- Talk about your ability to adapt quickly and easily to new situations, projects in progress, complex environments etc.

5.3 Work Experience

For all of your work experience, you need to provide evidence that you are able to meet the requirements of the position.

- Describe and focus on the following:
 - the work you did (the what),
 - who you worked with (the who),
 - what you accomplished (the results),
 - how you achieved success (the methodology) and
 - who benefitted from those results.
- Describe who you interacted with; their roles and yours
- Mention your ability to customize your approach, your language and engagement level depending on the audience (end-users, managers, directors, techies, developers etc.)
- If your resume is tailored to the client's industry, it can include acronyms and language the customer will recognize, but if your resume is more generic then be cautious of language that may cause confusion.

For your longer CV, utilizing the content mentioned above, describe all of your work experience as projects:

- Include current projects relevant to the job for which you are applying
- Projects should appear in reverse chronological order
- Each Project header should include:
 - your role
 - project Name
 - duration of the project
- Each project should have a description to provide context:
 - should be in paragraph format but very brief (2 to 3 sentences) as it is only there to set the context
 - doesn't need to include the project name if the name is in the header
 - doesn't need text like "as a project manager, Jane..." because the heading above it already says that Jane was the project manager for this particular project
- In bullet form, each project should have:
 - responsibilities, deliverables, experience, skills etc.
 - talk about deliverables you created or supervised the creation of.
 - mention document names and methodologies you used to create the document or to gather information
 - talk about the team you worked with: team size, roles, level of experience etc.
 - what were the results of your efforts for the company? Examples: increased productivity, improved communication, efficiencies, cost savings etc.

5.4 Community Involvement and Other Experience

This section is optional and should only be included if you have something to include that is relevant to the job for which you are applying. In tabular form include information related to any of the following:

- Volunteer experience
- Community involvement
- Teaching experience

5.5 Technical Experience/Skills

If you are applying for a technical role this section should be included, otherwise it is optional and should only be included if you have something relevant to mention. In tabular form, include the various technologies you have used to do your job including:

- Hardware and operating systems
- Network administration tools
- Customer support systems
- Programming languages and development environments
- Ather applications used to support your role such as
 - automated testing tools
 - requirement or test case management tools
 - Agile (or other) project management tools
- Include only the most current and/or relevant information

5.6 Career History

This section is a tabular list of the organizations for which you have worked. It should be in reverse chronological order and include:

- Company name
- Your position/role
- Dates worked
- Additional details should not be included in this section – they should be included as projects in the Project Experience section of your resume.

5.7 Recent Presentations

This section should only be included if you have something relevant to list. In tabular form, it should be in reverse chronological order and include presentations:

- Done within the last 3 years
- Publicized events or organized conferences
- Internal presentations at previous employers
- Relevant to your role or to the industry of the client

5.8 Professional Certifications/Designations

This section should only be included if you have something relevant to your potential employer to list. In tabular form, it should be in reverse chronological order and include certifications or designations that:

- You currently still hold
- If you have an industry-specific certifications make sure to include it here if you are applying for a job within that industry.

5.9 Education and Professional Development

This section should be in reverse chronological order, in tabular form and include:

- Degrees, diplomas, programs, courses, workshops etc.
- Education completed relatively recently (within the last 5 years)

- Education that is relevant to your role
- Courses completed more than 5 years ago may be included if they would still be deemed relevant.
- If you have taken industry-specific training include it here if you are applying for a job within that industry.
- Education listed should include the program name, date it was completed and the name of the institution you attended.
- Education that is in progress should also be included provided you indicate that it is in progress (consider putting the expected date of completion if it is in the near future)

6. Role-Specific Guidance

Use the hints below based on the role you are applying for. For all roles, highlight the following project items, where relevant and applicable:

- Project type, scope and schedule
- Risk, priority/visibility
- Results, savings, deliverables
- Team size (number of people you managed if appropriate)

Business and Systems Analysis

- Mention BA-specific documents you produced such as: business, functional and non-functional requirements, business plan, process mapping etc.
- If you acted as the PM on a project, or acted on their behalf in their absence, refer to the Project Management section for guidance on key information to include in your resume.
- Mention tools and methodologies you used.
- Highlight your attention to detail, drive for high-quality and business success
- Talk about your ability to:
 - Facilitate sessions with a variety of audiences (senior management, developers, QA, end-users etc.).
 - Communicate effectively (written and verbal) with different groups (technical and non-technical information)
 - Influence a group, to resolve conflict, to bridge the gap between the business, IT and users.
 - Plan and estimate BA related work
 - Learn and adapt quickly to new situations, projects, applications, team members, tools, methodologies, project management styles etc.
 - Ability to affect change in the projects and employers you work on and at.

Quality Assurance

- Mention QA-specific documents you produced such as: Test Strategy, Test Plan, Test Scripts, automated scripts, test result log etc.
- Mention tools and methodologies you used for automation, tracing test scripts, planning out a test strategy etc.
- Talk about number of defects, number of features tested (major/minor features, bug fixes, enhancements etc.), # and size of test scripts, use-cases

- Talk about your ability to learn and adapt quickly to new situations, projects, applications, tools, teams etc.
- Talk about your attention to detail and focus on delivering quality software

Project Management

- Mention PM-specific documents you produced such as: project plan, project initiation document, next stage plan, Microsoft Project plan etc.
- Mention experience with the following types of scenarios:
 - joining an in-progress project vs starting a brand-new project
 - rescuing an at-risk project (focus on what you did to save the project, make it successful, save the company money etc.)
 - managing high priority, high budget, multi-year, multi-team projects
 - managing projects with high risks such as inadequate budget or resources, mission-critical systems, large numbers of end-users etc.
 - managing multiple projects at once
- Mention ability to see the big picture while being in touch with the details
- Highlight your PM training and how it has helped you manage projects

Technical Roles

- Mention documents you produced such as: functional, system or database design documents, architectural design, technical requirements, technical specifications, upgrade strategy, backup and rollback plans.
- Mention the tools and technologies you used
- Talk about:
 - lessons learned and how you applied these to future projects/clients
 - relevant numbers such as # of users to support, # of computers upgraded, version numbers of major software that our customers may be familiar with (ex. Windows, Oracle, PeopleSoft, SAP, Office etc)
 - your ability to learn and adapt quickly to new situations, projects, applications, tools, teams etc.
 - your ability to interact with technical and non-technical groups
- Highlight situations where you quickly got up to speed and provided immediate value to the project/company
- If you have experience directly relevant to the job you are applying for highlight this, but also make sure to highlight how your wide range of experience is a huge asset as well. Demonstrate how you will be able to do well in a variety of situations.

7. Final Check – Word Cloud

Once you have your resume complete, we suggest that you utilize a new tool that analyzes text provided to create a visual representation of the data included, and relevancy of the words are presented via size. Wordcloud is a free, online tool that generates word clouds based on text a user provides. This may seem like an obscure recommendation for a job seeker, but it can be immensely helpful in determining key words from a job description.

It's also a great way to visually see which keywords are mostly used in your own resume (or cover letter). In some cases, employers are using an electronic applicant tracking tool to

determine which candidates are a good fit for their openings. If they are relying on keywords only, you can set yourself up to do better than a candidate who doesn't do this type of analysis.

It is an extremely simple tool to use. Once your content is pasted into the create screen, the tool analyzes the words contained in the text and creates a word cloud. The actual format of the word cloud is randomized, so it's best to make a few changes once the cloud is created.

Create a word cloud for each version of your resume, as well as each job description to which you are applying. If your word cloud has "Business Analyst" OR "Systems Analyst" as the two largest words, you'll want to ensure your resume word cloud also has those words in prevalent sizes.

Sample Analyst Position WORDCLOUD RESULT



Wordcloud SIZE:

- Biggest word on your screen means it is mostly used in the Job description so you should put that word at least 5-7 times in your resume.
- Medium size word means you should use 3-5 times in your resume.
- Small size words means you should use that word at least 1-2 times in your resume

If you don't see them at all, you will want to revisit whether you are really qualified for the position. If you still think you possess the required knowledge, skills and abilities for the job, it may be time to make some resume edits and include those missing keywords into your resume.

This tool doesn't guarantee you will receive an interview, but it can come in handy as you prepare to apply for positions. By having a better understanding of the keywords (and skills) the organization is looking for, you can better prepare your resume and land an interview or make relationship with a recruiter.

Two suggested sites (among hundreds available!) include <https://wordart.com/>
<https://www.wordclouds.com/>

8. Conclusion

As you can tell by how much guidance we've included in this document, writing a resume is more than just listing out the places you have worked!

Key things to remember:

- Your resume should demonstrate that you are the best possible candidate
- Use your resume to paint a picture of who you are
- Detail the great work you have done and the results of your efforts
- Demonstrate how your experience and knowledge make you a huge asset
- Be proud of your accomplishments

One final word of advice:

It will take time and effort to get your resume "just right", but that effort is all worth it when you have impressed a Hiring Manager and secured the position you want!