

JEN'S 10 RESUME

- 1 Master the details.** Through your resume, you are marketing yourself as someone who has high competency in getting down the details. Triple check how formal names are documented. For example: Sam Fox School of Design & Visual Arts (not Samfox school), Toky Branding + Design, 2x4, Inc., Two Twelve Associates, Inc. etc. Also, watch tense of action verbs as they relate to experience – are you still employed by said company? Use present tense. If not, past.
- 2 Do not be democratic in the division of your resume experiences.** Devote the most amount of real estate on your resume to the experience you feel will resonate the most with the recipient. Internship at Vera Wang? Oh yes. Summer job at Coldstone Creamery? Not so much.
- 3 Be cautious when qualifying your level of software expertise.** Make sure you really are 'proficient' in Excel and Photoshop, and if you have only basic knowledge of InDesign, than that is how you state it. Luckily, these qualifying terms are pretty subjective, but be careful nonetheless.
- 4 Make SURE to include:** All professional experiences (internships, assistantships), job experience (restaurants, camps, work study), education (abroad, summer courses), student groups (emphasize leadership positions), honors, publications, awards, affiliations and memberships, exhibitions. We can strategize individually how to group these, based on your 'library of stuff.'
- 5 What NOT to include:** While there are always exceptions, generally avoid the following unless otherwise specified by the employer/application: objectives (sentiment reserved for cover letters); hobbies and interests; high school experiences, references (separate document); list of 'relevant classes' and declaration of subjective and vague 'soft skills' such as 'highly organized' and 'passionate.'
- 6 Spell check.** This sounds obvious, but many of you don't do this. In addition to running the spell check feature, also triple check proper spellings of names, programs, institutions on a physical copy of your resume. It is amazing how many more mistakes you catch on paper rather than on a screen.
- 7 Shouldn't be a mystery to understand.** Read each role description back to yourself as if you weren't at all familiar with the industry or geographical location of the employer – does it make sense? Include a description of the organization within your narrative describing your role and context in the lead, unless the venue is very obvious (the White House, FBI, Smithsonian Institution).
- 8 Be illustrative in your descriptions.** Be economic with your words in describing an internship experience, and be specific in detailing your contributions. Mention specific projects and/or clients if appropriate. If I am evaluating your resume, I want to 'picture' you at work. Lead with action verbs.
- 9 Be expressive – but rein it in.** Resist the urge to create a mark, flourish or other embellishment or 'brand' on your professional materials. Even if it's done well, this gesture may be polarizing – imagine the recipient remarking that it's nicely done but "doesn't feel like us." At this stage of the game, you are going for understated elegance – clear, brief, specific. Very Swiss.
- 10 Commit to typeface and structure.** While your professional documents should be organic and grow with you as your academic and professional career progress, you should make a fairly solid commitment to your typeface selections and other basic presentation, since you should be using throughout all materials (resume, cover letter, teaching philosophy, other writing samples, etc.)