

It's time to retool your résumé

Fennell, Andrew; Fast Company ¹ ¹ Fast Company . Chicago Tribune ; Chicago, Ill. [Chicago, Ill]. 22 Aug 2021: 6.

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FULL TEXT

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought about a renewed interest in the people behind the résumés. This is largely due to the fact that employers are focused on building and reaffirming a strong corporate culture. And choosing the right employees is a crucial part of this. Employers are also placing more focus on work-life balance, mental health and the well-being of their workers.

If you're looking for a new job right now, adding personal details to your résumé could be exactly what you need to improve your chances of landing the role. But how can you utilize these details to improve and round out your résumé?

Include volunteering that's pandemic-related

Whether you found yourself furloughed, let go, or are simply looking to make a difference and support your community, you might have done some pandemic volunteering. If so, include those activities on your résumé. For instance, you might have been volunteering to deliver food, work at a food bank, teach vocational skills or even provide free child care. Whatever you did to make a difference, you can use this to your advantage on your résumé by showcasing the workplace skills involved, as well as your desirable personality traits.

For example, people who volunteer are often thought to be caring, compassionate, selfless, driven and reliable; these are also great traits in an employee. And if you choose to highlight these skills on your résumé, you can use this opportunity to highlight transferable skills, such as teamwork, communication, adaptability and problem-solving.

As my company recently observed, one in seven people in the U.K. have worked in the gig economy, such as providing on-demand delivery and taxi-driving. Thus, you can also include paid positions you have taken up, as long as they can demonstrate a benefit to the fight against COVID-19.

Add hobbies and interests

When many people found themselves in local lockdowns or with more free time, they started adopting new hobbies. If you chose to use your time to take up a hobby that will look great on your résumé, don't forget to add this. Alternatively, you might already have some interesting hobbies you've yet to utilize.

Some of the most popular hobbies include learning a new language or instrument, photography, painting, playing sports, thrifting or perhaps other side hustles like freelance writing or graphic design.

These hobbies and interests are particularly great if they're related to your chosen industry. But even if they're not, they can demonstrate your creativity and other important assets, such as attention to detail, interpersonal skills and project management.

Show off your team or club involvement

Whether this is a new pursuit or you've been dedicated to your sport for years, adding descriptions of your teams and activities can be a great way to give recruiters a peek at who you really are. Moreover, sports can be the ideal way to show off your skills and personality traits.

For example, team sports like football, baseball or basketball require team building, communication and passion. Other activities like running or swimming require you to set goals and show dedication, all of which are desirable to employers.

Outline how you have cared for others

Finally, if you spent the pandemic caring for others, make it clear. Caregiving – during a pandemic or otherwise – demonstrates the sort of compassionate and regular responsibility that is often also time-intensive. Therefore, show off how much it is part of your life and boost your résumé at the same time.

This might include a number of different roles, such as caring for a loved one or elderly relative, or offering support to those struggling with loneliness or mental health.

For example, you may have dedicated your free time to make or monitor phone calls for mental health charities and groups.

No matter who you looked after, this sort of activity shows you are kind, caring, dedicated and patient. It might also require other important workplace-related skills, such as good communication, organization and problem-solving.

Together, these skills can help strengthen your application and impress potential employers.

How to deftly include self-development details

Your personal details can be added at different points of your résumé. But, ultimately, your goals and target positions will determine how you choose to add them. Here are a few quick tips to consider without needing a complete do-over of your résumé:

* If you're particularly proud of your recent volunteering, or your new hobbies and skills are very relevant to the role, add these to your personal profile at the top of your résumé.

* You can also add a "hobbies and interests" section if you think this can bolster your application; this can go at the bottom of your résumé, giving you space to add more detail and skills.

* Make sure to outline any transferable skills or achievements you gained during the pandemic in your hobbies or employment section.

* You should also update your core skills section to reflect any new skills you learned.

With an increasing number of companies using social media to hire staff, you should also update your social profiles, such as your LinkedIn page, to reflect these personal attributes. So if you're planning on updating your résumé, be sure to take the opportunity to utilize your personal details and highlight how these make you a great employee.

By embracing the efforts you've undertaken during the pandemic, such as volunteer work, hobbies and other personal development skills (even if they're not immediately obvious), you can help the recruiter build a more comprehensive picture of the professional you are beyond a piece of paper.

This more in-depth résumé will be crucial to finding a new job in the coming years.

CAPTION: Photo: (Person working on a résumé on a laptop computer) TERO VESALAINEN/DREAMSTIME

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DETAILS

Subject:	Problem solving; Athletic recruitment; Personality traits; Mental health; Employers; Communication; Coronaviruses; Volunteers; Hobbies; Pandemics; COVID-19
Business indexing term:	Subject: Employers
Publication title:	Chicago Tribune; Chicago, Ill.
First page:	6
Publication year:	2021
Publication date:	Aug 22, 2021

Section:	Success
Publisher:	Tribune Publishing Company, LLC
Place of publication:	Chicago, Ill.
Country of publication:	United States, Chicago, Ill.
Publication subject:	General Interest Periodicals--United States
ISSN:	10856706
Source type:	Newspapers
Language of publication:	English
Document type:	News
ProQuest document ID:	2563267513
Document URL:	https://www.proquest.com/newspapers/time-retool-your-résumé/docview/2563267513/se-2?accountid=44910
Copyright:	Copyright Tribune Publishing Company, LLC Aug 22, 2021
Last updated:	2021-08-22
Database:	U.S. Major Dailies

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